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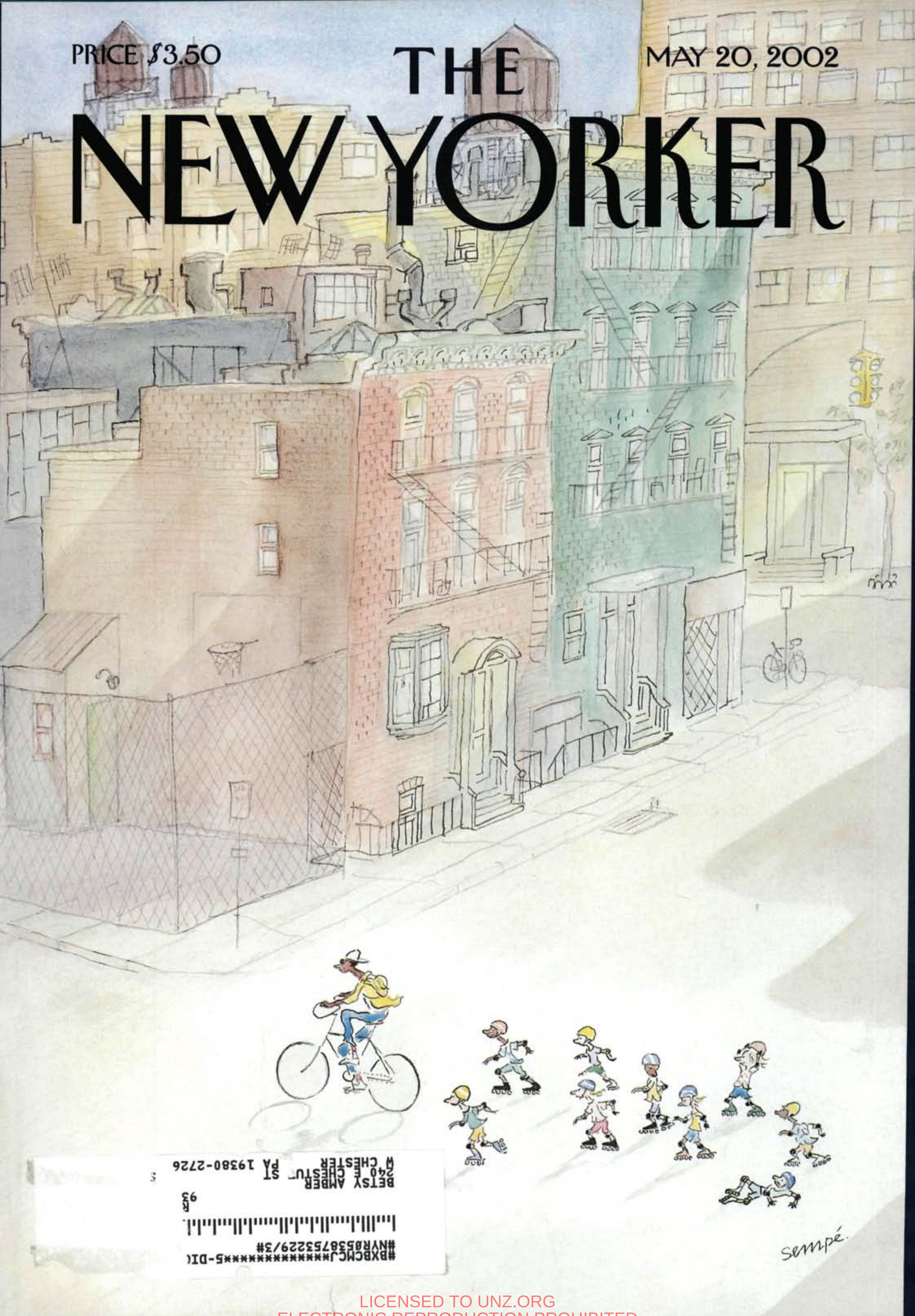

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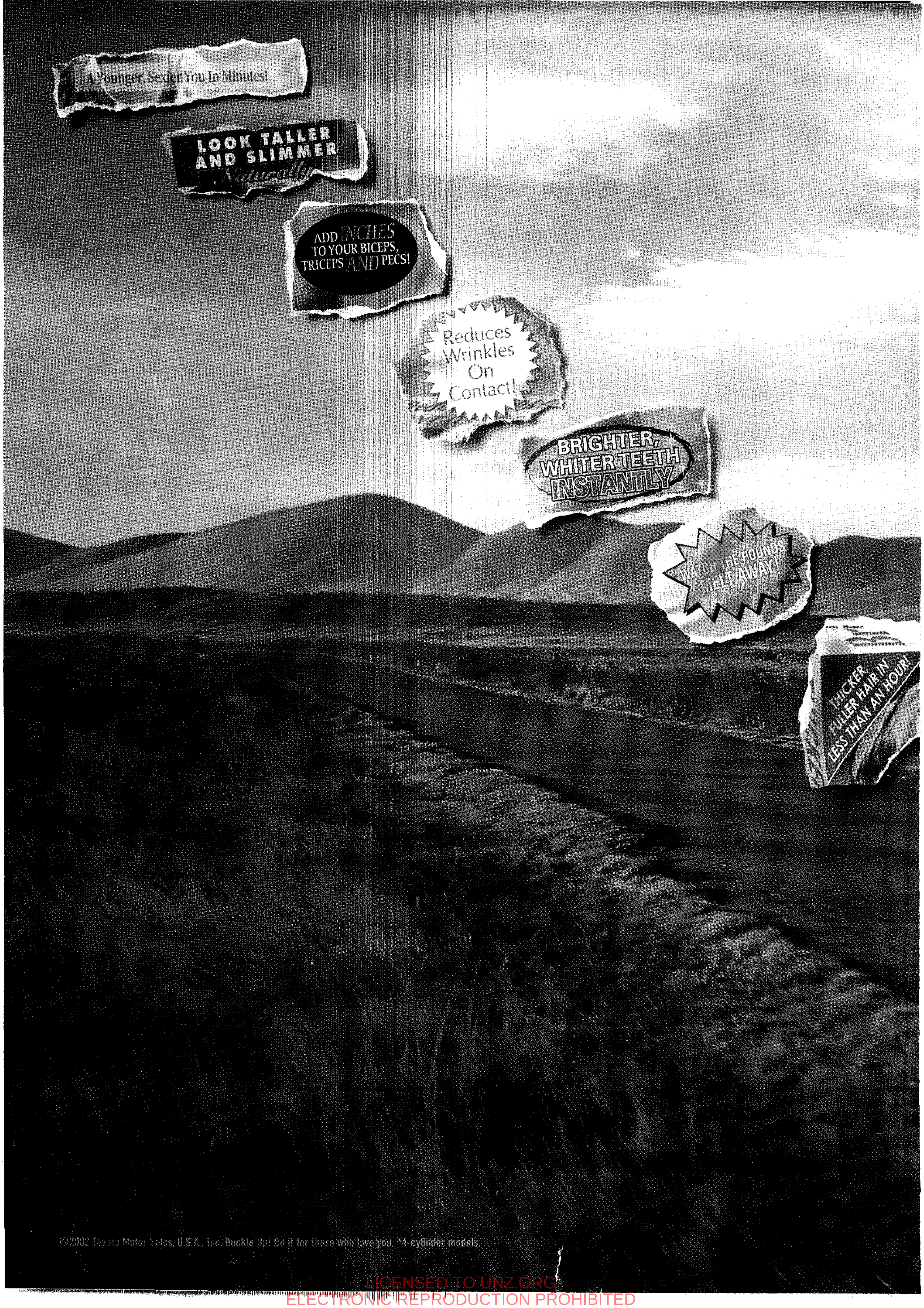
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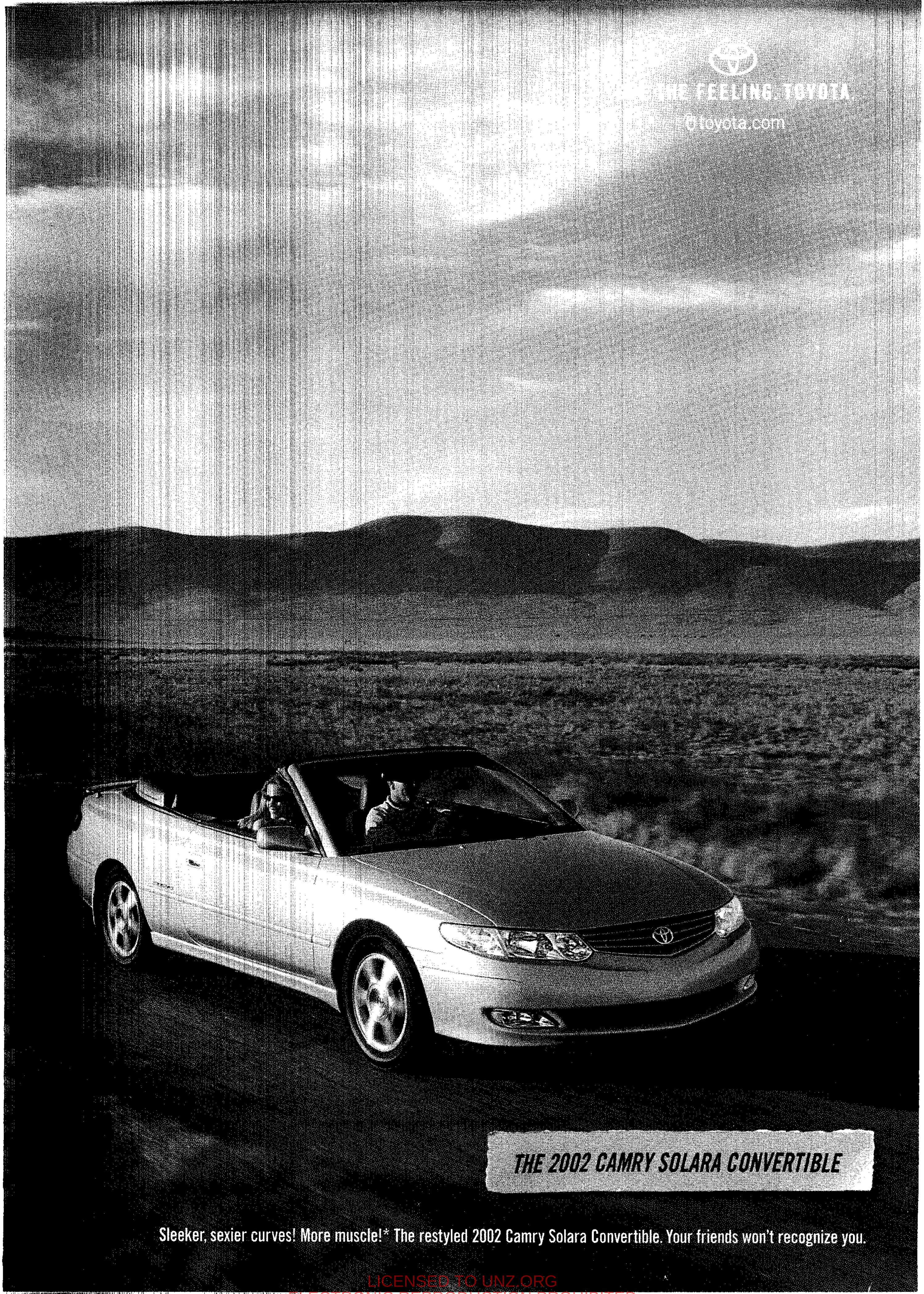
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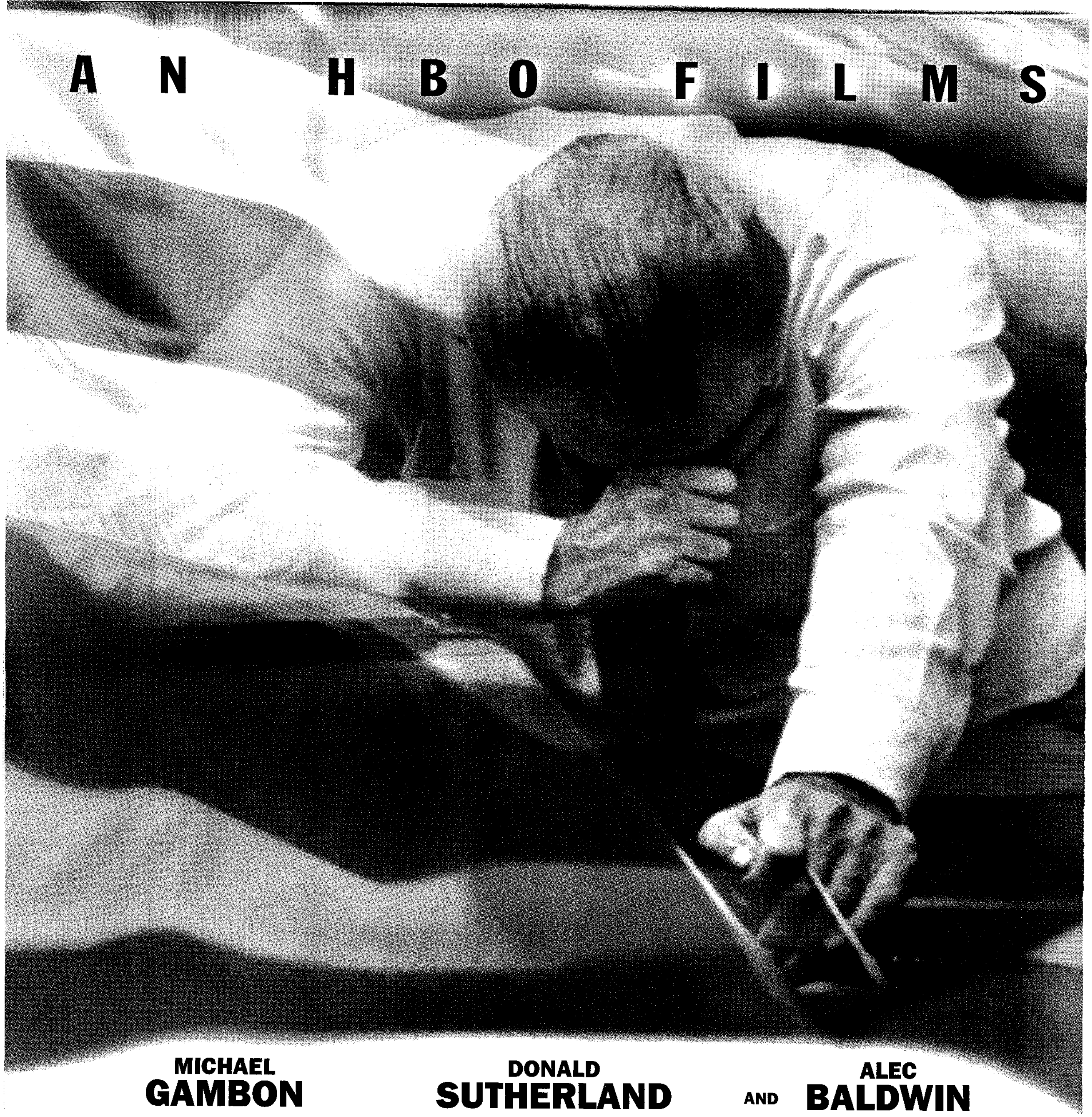

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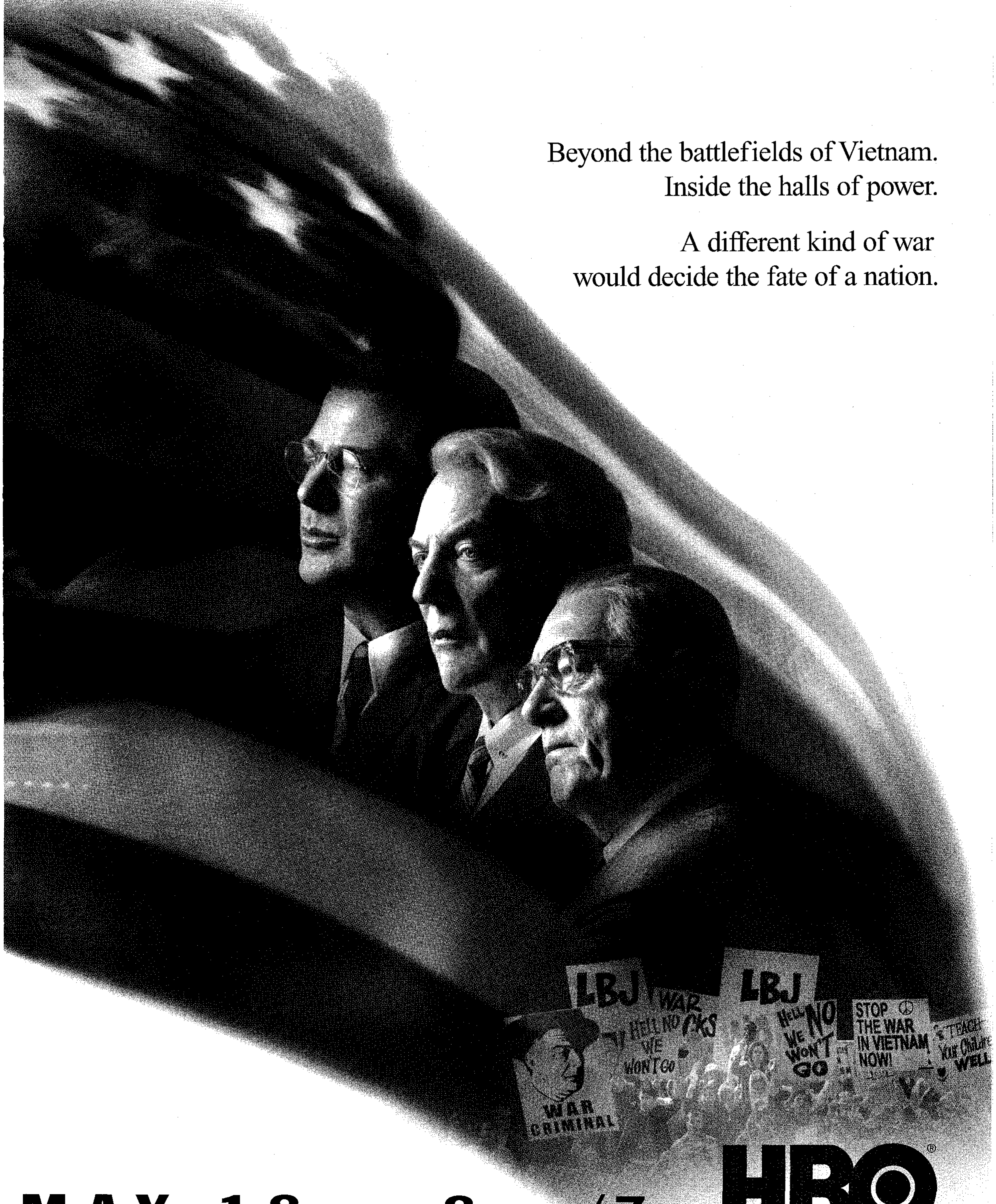

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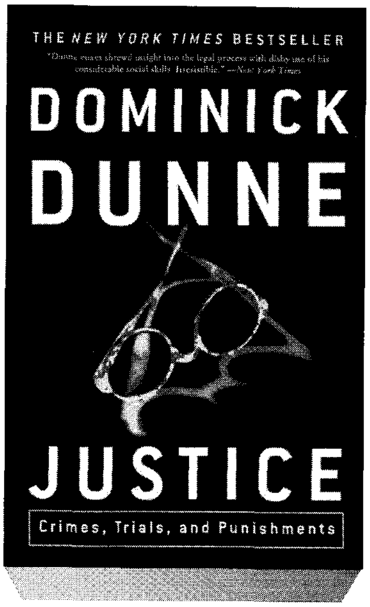
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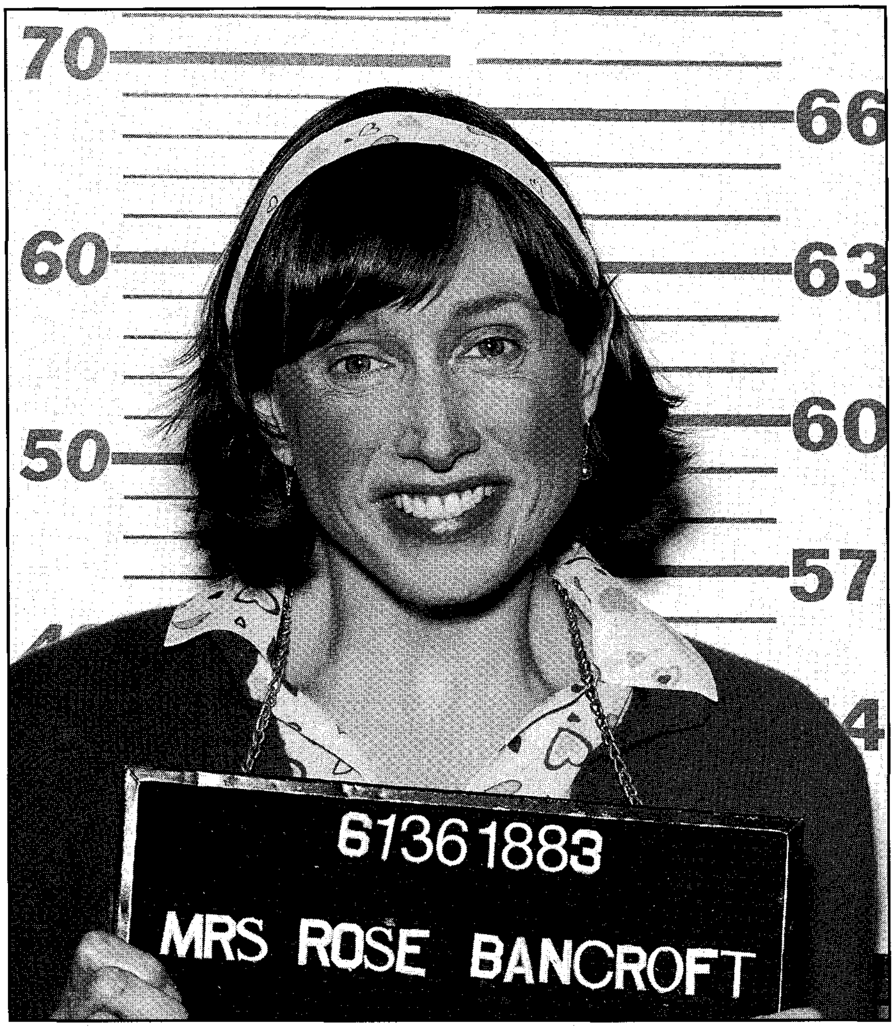

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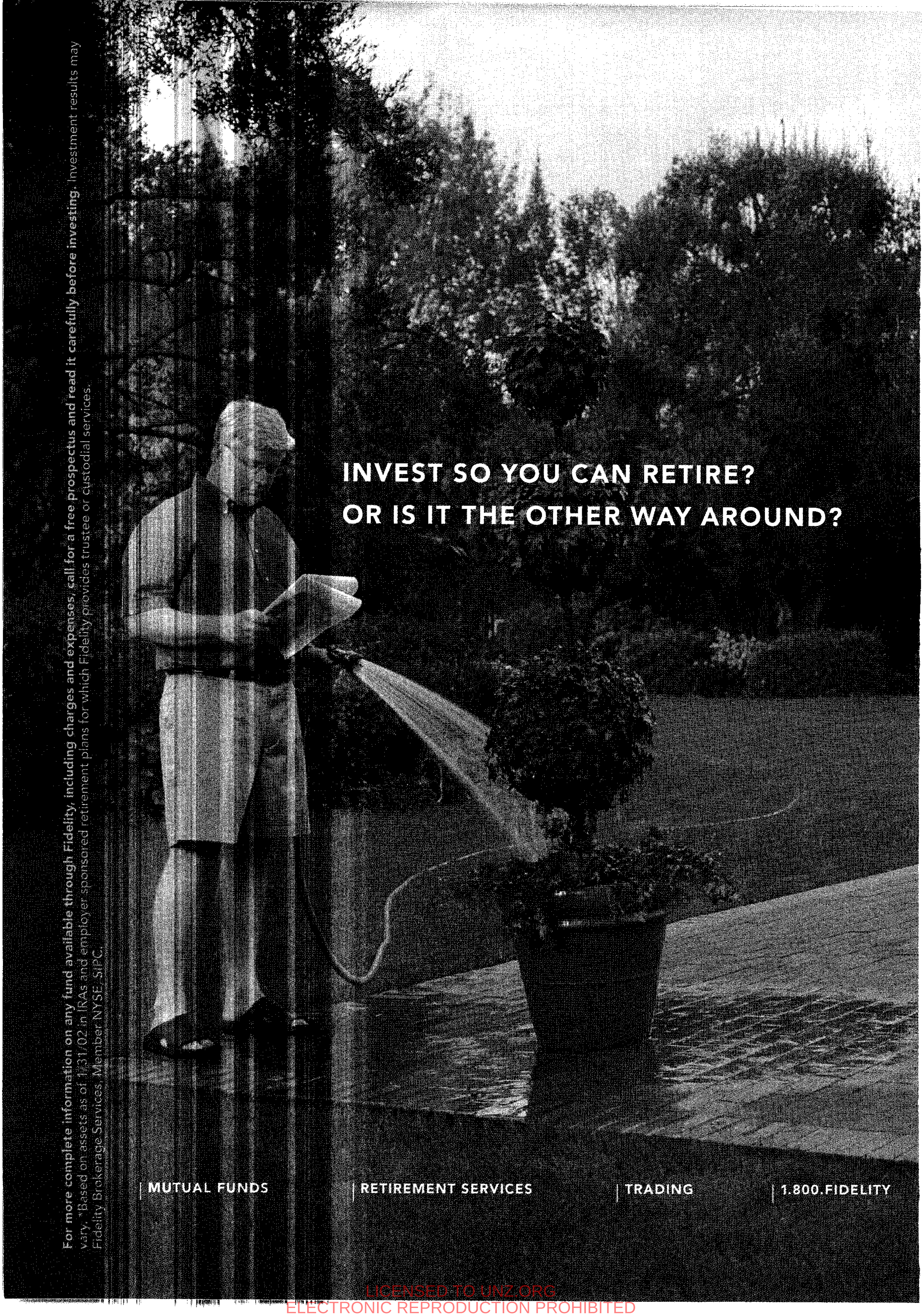
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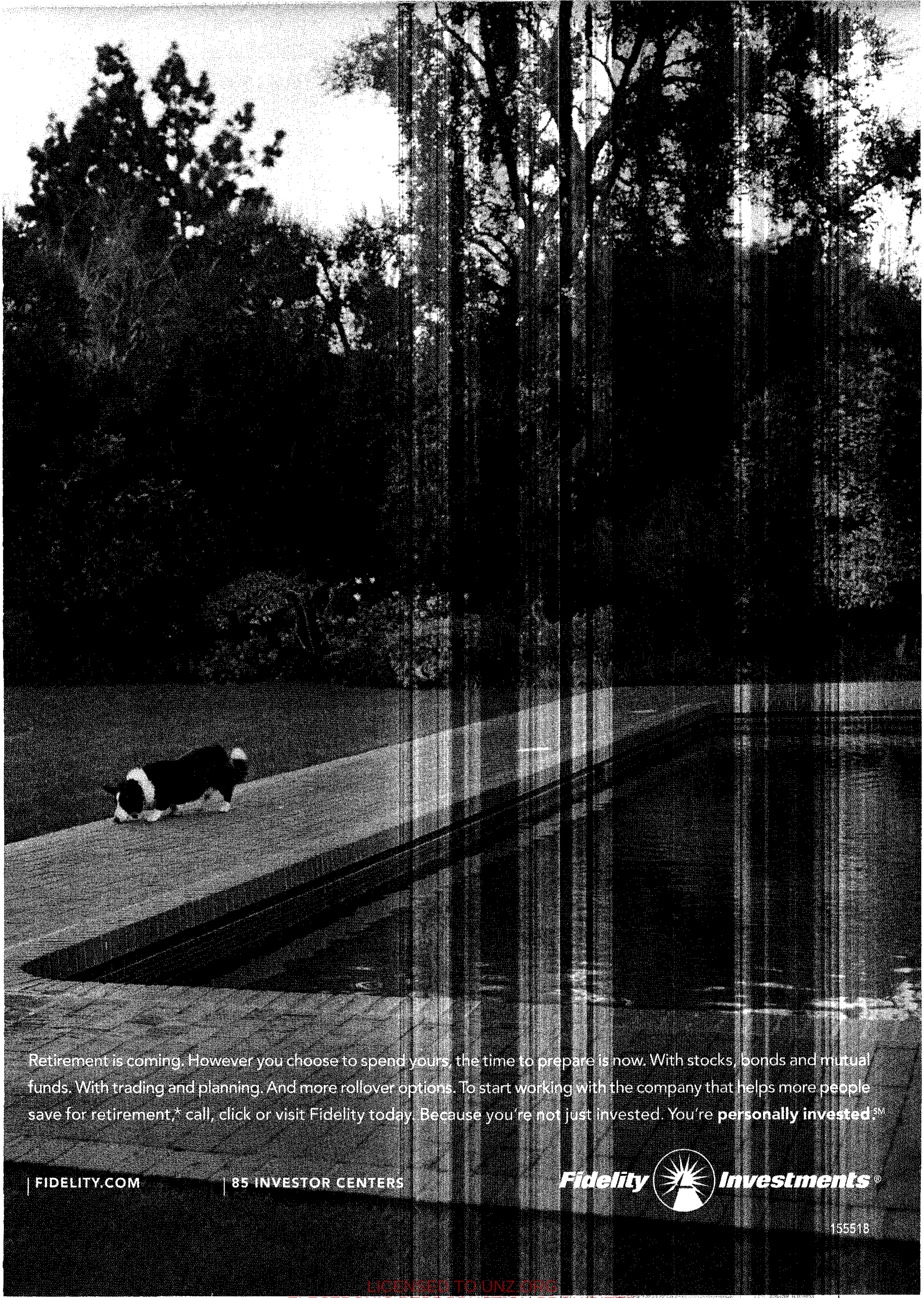

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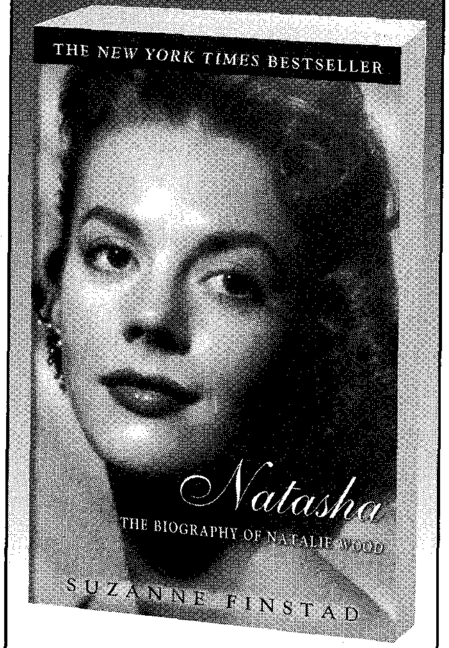

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CONTRIBUTORS

Paul Goldberger ("Groundwork," p. 86) is the magazine's architecture critic and the co-author of "The World Trade Center Remembered."

Rebecca Mead ("A Man-Child in Lotusland," p. 48) has been a staff writer since 1997.

Milan Kundera (Fiction, p. 96) is the author of nine novels, including "Ignorance," which will be published in October.

Andrew Barlow (Shouts & Murmurs, p. 47) is a freelance writer and musician living in New York.

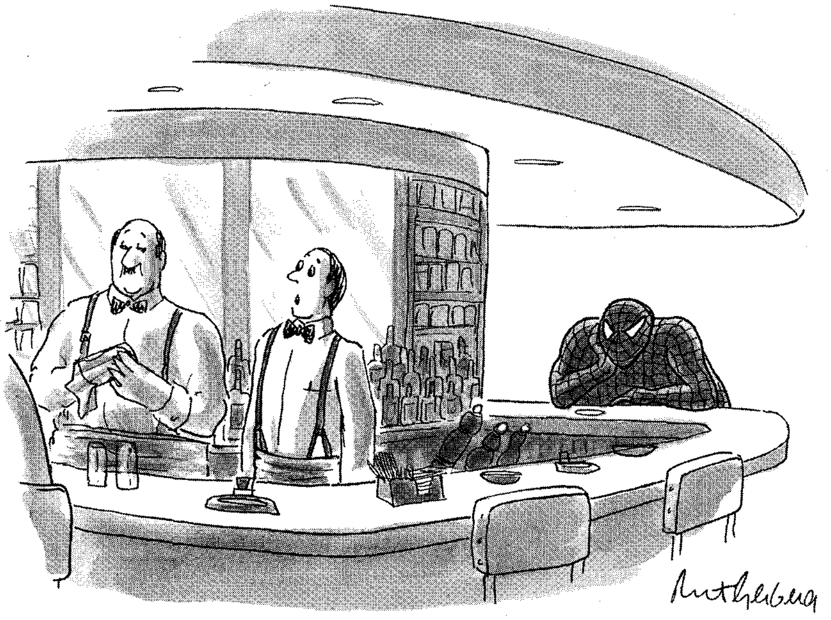
Martin Amis (Books, p. 106) is the author of "The War Against Cliché: Essays and Reviews, 1971-2000," which was published in November.

Joel Meyerowitz (Portfolio, p. 68) will exhibit his photographs of Ground Zero at 195 Broadway, in lower Manhattan, in late summer. Some of the photographs are also part of an exhibit that, under the auspices of the State Department, is travelling to sixty countries in the next three years.

Mark Singer ("A Year of Trouble," p. 42) has been writing the U.S. Journal column since the fall of 2000. His books include "Funny Money" and "Citizen K."

David Denby (Books, p. 111; The Current Cinema, p. 114), a film critic for the magazine, is working on a book about personal finance.

Kevin Conley (The Talk of the Town, p. 38) is the author of "Stud: Adventures in Breeding," which came out in March. ♦



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THE MAIL

AT HOME IN HARLEM

The Reverend Calvin O. Butts III, the pastor of the Abyssinian Baptist Church, tells Adam Gopnik that he wants Harlem "to remain an African-American community," though he allows that he would not mind "a young couple who move into [the] community" who "happen to be white" ("Saving Paradise," April 22nd & 29th). But to which Harlem was Butts referring? Harlem has been home to many groups—Dutch farmers, Irish squatters, Germans, and Eastern European Jews—but to none exclusively. Butts is right to try to persuade blacks who have fled to the suburbs to return, but he should also be encouraging anyone who sincerely believes in Harlem to buy a home and open a business. Whatever the color of our skin, many residents of Harlem love this place. Outsiders like the Arkansas-born Bill Clinton wouldn't be here if they didn't.

Mitchell Owens
New York City

ASHCROFT AND PATRIOTISM

Jeffrey Toobin, in his Profile of John Ashcroft, calls him "the most socially conservative figure to become Attorney General in many years" ("Ashcroft's Ascent," April 15th). But more disquieting than his willingness to front for right-wing causes is Ashcroft's tendency, exhibited in the Senate testimony Toobin quotes, to equate any criticism of his rhetoric and methods with helping America's enemies. This is manifestly inconsistent with the fairness his office requires. It should be cause for alarm that Ashcroft nonetheless enjoys wide public support for—and White House approval of—his extreme positions.

Steven S. Berizzi
Norwalk, Conn.

WATER AND WEALTH

William Finnegan's piece on the failure of water privatization in Cochabamba, Bolivia, is useful in pointing out how private-sector participation in utilities is not an antidote to bad decision-making, bad politics, and bad governance ("Leasing the Rain," April 8th). Making water available to the poor is an essential development goal. While the article could be deemed too critical of the World Bank's role in fostering privatization, we agree with its principal conclusion: governments have an obligation to insure that water is made both accessible and affordable. Cochabamba was a failure on both counts and does no credit to anyone involved.

Danny Leipziger, Director
Finance, Private Sector, and Infrastructure,
Latin America & Caribbean
The World Bank
Washington, D.C.

Isabel Guerrero, Director
Bolivia, Ecuador, and Peru
The World Bank
Lima, Peru

DEFENDING SWEDEN

Ben Greenman underestimates the contribution Sweden has made to rock and roll when he calls the emergence of the Hives "surprising" in a country "previously known for giving us ABBA, Ikea, and other four-letter words" (Pop Music, April 22nd & 29th). In the past decade, Sweden has more than made up for the saccharine era of ABBA, exporting bands such as the alternative-rock Cardigans and the nineteen-sixties throwback Komeda (both on the Minty Fresh label) which filled the gap between disco and the Hives. Alongside these rock phenomenons, Swedish musicians spawned dozens of metal bands that gained notoriety for their intense presence and musical ability long before the Hives even created a buzz.

Kirsten Nelson
Brooklyn, N.Y.

•

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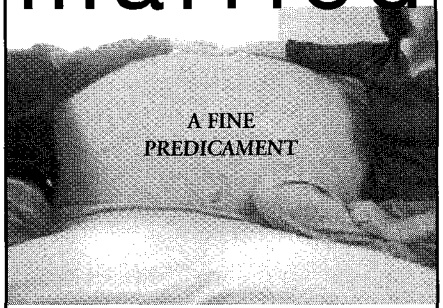
If we keep
getting it wrong,
how come it
feels so right?

married



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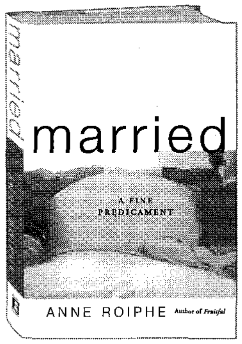

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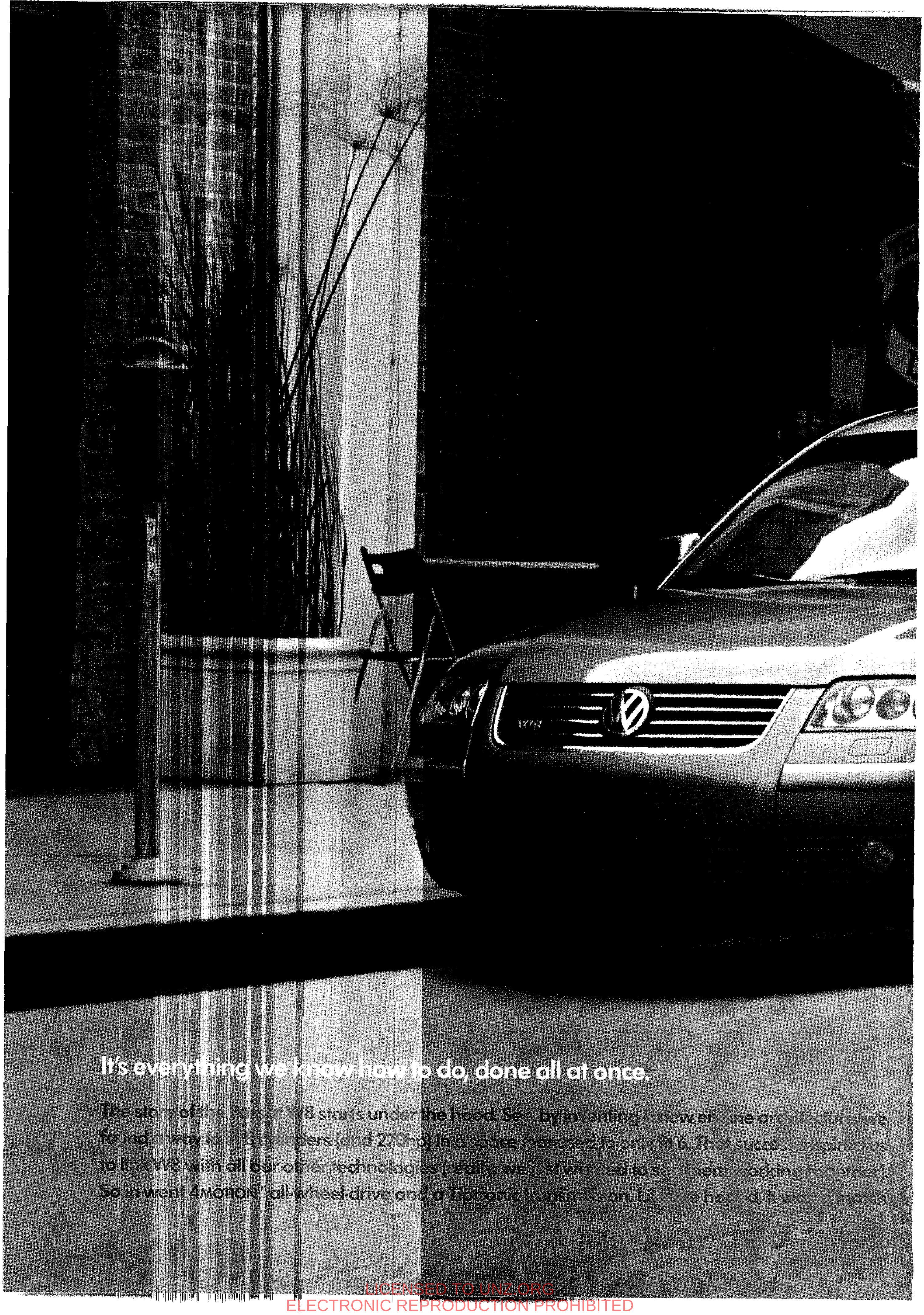

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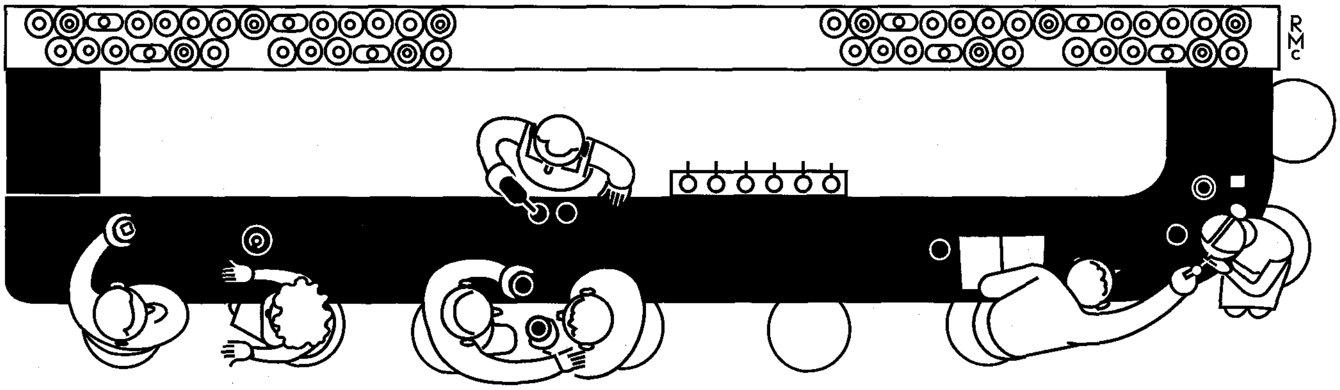

THE THEATRE
OPENINGS & PREVIEWS

Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.

BOYS AND GIRLS
A gay man moves in with two lesbian friends to offer their son a male role model, in a new play by Tom Donaghy. Gerald Gutierrez is the director. In previews. (The Duke, 229 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.)

HOUSE AND GARDEN
A pair of conjoined plays, performed simultaneously on two stages, by Alan Ayckbourn. John Tillinger is the director. In previews though May 19. Opens May 21 at 6:45. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

. . . IN THE ABSENCE OF SPRING . . .
Second Stage presents a drama by Joe Calarco, which traces twenty-four hours in the lives of a group of plane-crash survivors. In previews through May 18. Opens May 19 at 7. (McGinn/Cazale, Broadway at 76th St. 246-4422.)

ONE SHOT, ONE KILL
Richard Vetere's play is set at the U.S. Marine base in Quantico, Virginia. In previews through May 19. Opens May 20 at 8. (Primary Stages, 354 W. 45th St. 333-4052.)

ROOM TONE
The experimental theatre troupe Elevator Repair Service presents a work in progress. Performances begin May 17 at 7:30. (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288.)

SMELLING A RAT
The New Group takes on another Mike Leigh play, about a successful exterminator. In previews. (Samuel Beckett, 410 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

THIS THING OF DARKNESS
The Atlantic Theatre Company wraps up the season with a drama written by Craig Lucas and David Schulner. In previews. (336 W. 20th St. 239-6200.)

OPENED RECENTLY

THE ACTING COMPANY
The touring troupe's brief engagement continues through May 25 with "Pudd'nhead Wilson," an adaptation of Twain's novel. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 239-6200.)

THE CARPETBAGGER'S CHILDREN
Jean Stapleton, Hallie Foote, and Roberta Maxwell portray three daughters of a Union soldier, in Horton Foote's latest play. Michael Wilson is the director. (Reviewed in our issue of 9/10/01.) (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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19	20	21				

THE CRUCIBLE
A masterly revival by Richard Eyre of Arthur Miller's drama about the Salem witch-hunt of 1692, an allegory for the blacklisting delirium of the House Un-American Activities Committee. Abigail Williams (the edgy, excellent Angela Bettis), an orphaned seventeen-year-old Puritan, has been seen dancing in the woods trying to cast a spell over the wife (the expert Laura Linney) of her thirty-five-year-old lover and former employer, John Proctor (Liam Neeson, who is a force of nature). Miller demonstrates the hysteric turning herself into an event in order to preserve a sense of goodness and to project her dark, violent, repressed feelings onto others. (3/18/02) (Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200.)

ELAINE STRITCH AT LIBERTY
In her extraordinary one-woman show (co-created with *The New Yorker's* theatre critic John Lahr), Stritchie, as Noël Coward called her, once and for all confirms her status as a living legend. As she sings songs and tells tales about the ups and downs of her long life in the theatre, she ends up capturing more than a single lifetime; her show is the synthesis of so much that is rich and rewarding and heartbreaking about life on the stage. (Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 307-4100. Closes May 26.)

THE ELEPHANT MAN
Thanks to the 1980 David Lynch movie, just about everyone is familiar with the story of Victorian London's John Merrick, the Elephant Man, whose grotesque deformity took him from a cruel life in freak shows to a less cruel life among the medical community and the curious upper crust. Bernard Pomerance's 1979 play came first; today it seems a bit didactic, but it is still very moving, and the issues that it raises—about faith, colonialism, charity, sexuality—are just as thought provoking. Billy Crudup does a wonderful job as Merrick, a role played without the aid of theatrical prosthetics, and so does Rupert Graves as Frederick Treves, the surgeon who takes him in. Sean Mathias is the director. (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

ENSEMBLE STUDIO THEATRE
The first series in this year's six-week marathon of one-acts continues through May 19 with plays by Romulus Linney, Lisa-Maria Radano, Billy Aronson, and Brian Silberman. The marathon continues through June 16. (549 W. 52nd St. 247-4982.)

A FEW STOUT INDIVIDUALS
A new comedy by John Guare, directed by Michael Grief. (Signature, 555 W. 42nd St. 244-7529.)

FORTUNE'S FOOL
Turgenev's little-known 1848 play, set at a Russian country estate, stars Alan Bates as a down-on-his-luck gentleman living there and Frank Langella as his wealthy, arrogant neighbor. Just as their characters represent the gamut of the negative qualities of the ruling class, Langella and Bates seem to use up all the acting possibilities in the play as they goad and react to each other; from the moment they first appear on the stage together, it becomes almost unnecessary for anyone else to be present, so completely do they dominate the evening. Directed by Arthur Penn. (4/15/02) (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

THE GOAT; OR, WHO IS SYLVIA?
Left to his own devices, without society's rules or the superego's tyrannical eye, homo sapiens would shtup mud. Or so Edward Albee contends in his ninety-minute anecdote about a happily married, successful architect who falls in love with a goat called Sylvia. It takes all of Albee's expertise to tease this joke into an evening; but it allows Mercedes Ruehl some hilarious moments of high dudgeon as she trashes the house and her husband for "cruising livestock." David Esbjornson is the director. (Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

THE GODFADDA WORKOUT
A one-man show written and performed by Seth Isler. (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 239-6200.)

THE GRADUATE
This pointless production, starring Kathleen Turner as Mrs. Robinson, is endless and full of dead air. There are exactly two pleasures here: Victor Slezak, as Mr. Robinson, and Murphy Guyer, as Benjamin's father; they depict beautifully the anger and anxiety that underlie their postwar poolside bonhomie. Terry Johnson, who directed, adapted the novel and the screenplay, and we'll never understand why. (4/15/02) (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

THE GUYS
In Anne Nelson's drama, an editor helps a fire captain write eulogies for eight of his men killed in the September 11th attacks. Jim Simpson is the director. (The Flea, 41 White St. 226-2407.)

INTO THE WOODS
Stephen Sondheim's 1987 musical examination of fairy-tale archetypes stars Vanessa Williams and John McMartin. James Lapine, who wrote the book, is the director. (5/13/02) (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

JIMMY CARTER WAS A DEMOCRAT
Rinne Groff's play about politics, sex, and air-traffic control, set during the early nineteen-eighties. (The Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St. 255-5793.)

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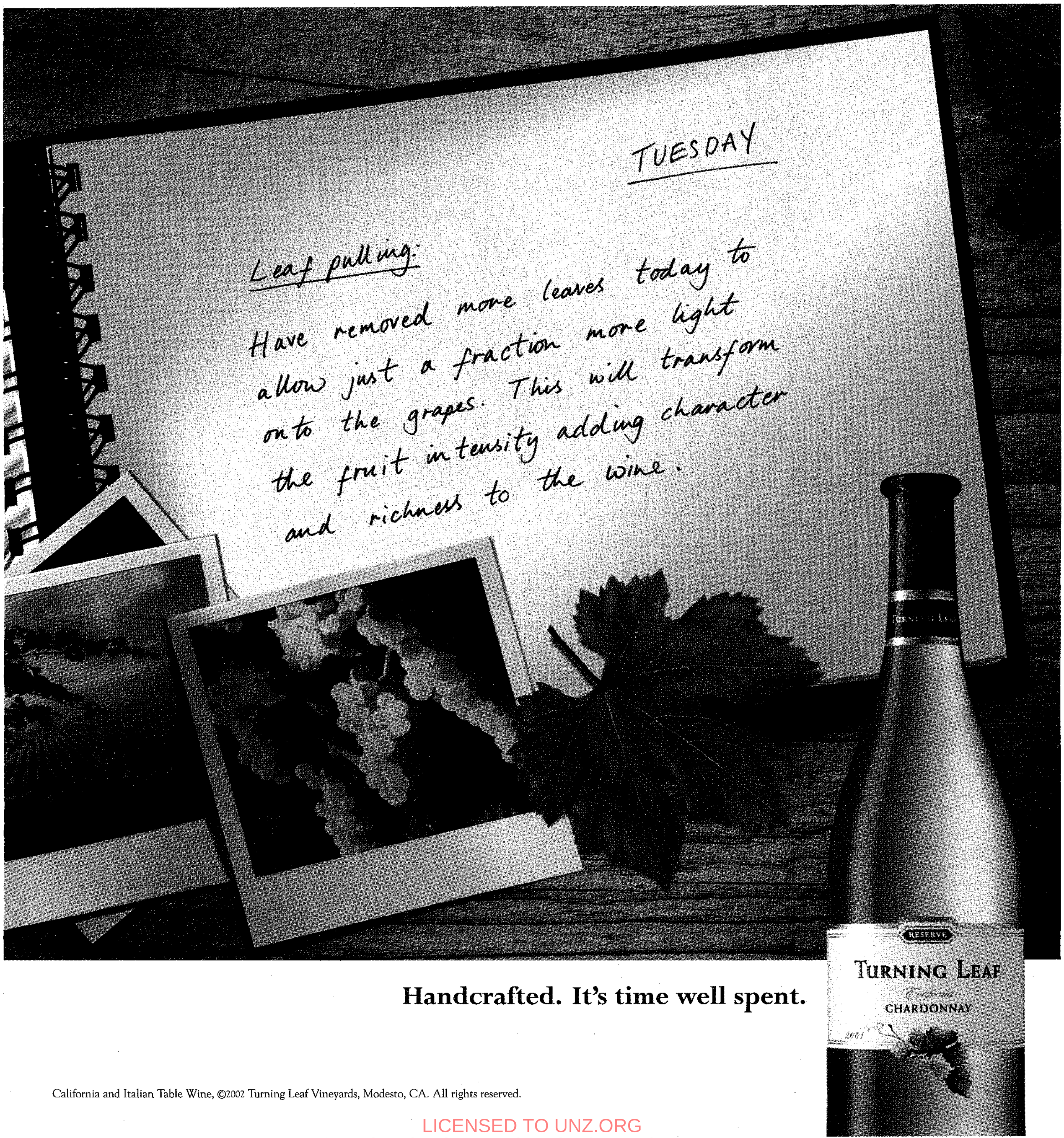
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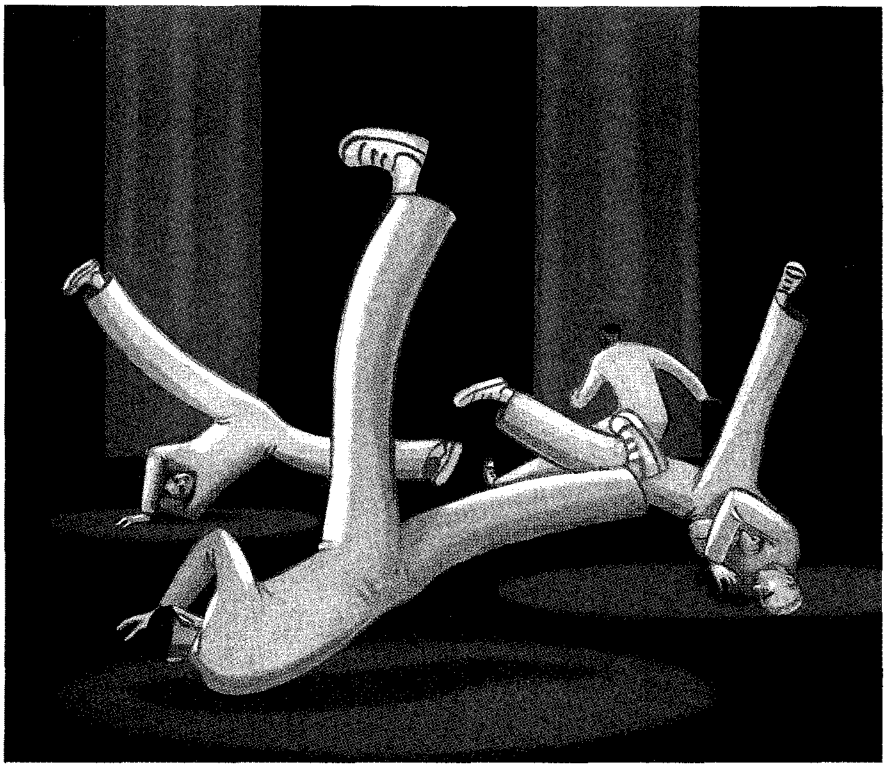
A LETTER FROM ETHEL KENNEDY
MCC Theatre presents a comedy by Christopher Gorman. (120 W. 28th St. 206-1515.)

LONG ISLAND SOUND
A recently discovered play by Noël Coward, about an Englishman's visit to the North Shore. (314 W. 54th St. 645-8228.)

THE MAN WHO HAD ALL THE LUCK
A revival of Arthur Miller's 1940 drama. (5/13/02) (American Airlines Theatre, 227 W. 42nd St. 719-1300.)

METAMORPHOSES
Ovid's tales, loosely adapted and directed by Mary Zimmerman, who has had the ingenious idea of staging the caprice of the gods in a swimming pool. The production is fun and full of wonder, but it illustrates rather than dramatizes psychic struggle. The show's gimmick, the pool, turns out to be its metaphor—refreshing and shallow. (3/18/02) (Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 239-6200.)



Compagnie Käfig, a hip-hop dance troupe from Lyon, France, at the Joyce.

ALISON SEIFFER

MR. GOLDWYN
As an exercise in hagiography, this play about the Hollywood mogul and legendary maestro of the malaprop makes A&E's "Biography" look edgy. The show has no dramatic trajectory, no psychological insight, and no second act. (3/25/02) (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 239-6200.)

MORNING'S AT SEVEN
The question all of the characters in this revival of Paul Osborne's 1939 back-porch drama ask one way or another is: What am I going to do with my life? This is commercial Broadway fare, so everybody gets their answer within two hours. It's bland stuff, sort of Chekhov light, but the pleasing all-star cast (Elizabeth Franz, Julie Hagerty, Buck Henry, Piper Laurie, Christopher Lloyd, William Biff McGuire, Estelle Parsons, Frances Sternhagen, and Stephen Tobolowsky) puts this rickety workhorse through its paces. Directed by Daniel Sullivan. (Lyceum, 149 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

THE ODYSSEY
Derek Walcott's adaptation of Homer's epic poem, in a Willow Cabin Theatre Company production. (St. Clement's, 423 W. 46th St. 279-4200. Closes June 2.)

OKLAHOMA!
There are stupendous pleasures in the Royal National Theatre's award-winning version of Rodgers and Hammerstein's 1943 American classic. Many of them are due to the high-spirited, humorous choreography of Susan Stroman, and to Anthony Ward's picturesque set, which immediately submerges us in a gorgeous world of folk innocence. But technique, which can make a show work, is not enough to make it wonderful. (4/1/02) (Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 307-4100.)

PEARL THEATRE COMPANY
Presenting "Romeo and Juliet" and "Much Ado About Nothing" in repertory. (80 St. Mark's Pl. 598-9802.)

PIGTOWN
A charming, vivacious production of a far less successful script about life in Limerick in the twentieth century. The playwright, Mike Finn, uses the life of a butcher who was born at the beginning of the century and died at the end to string the show's scenes together. Although Mr. Finn has a good ear for the telling turn of phrase, his characters are stereotypes, his show has little momentum, and the only thing we learn about the history of Limerick is that pork butchering was once a significant industry. Nonetheless, under Charlotte Moore's brilliant direction, the splendid cast makes the most of it; watching Limerick residents learn to swim based on instructions read over the radio is incredibly funny, and there are more than enough similarly amusing scenes. (Irish Rep, 132 W. 22nd St. 727-2737.)

PRIVATE LIVES
In Noël Coward's comedy of bad manners, two wonderful actors, Alan Rickman and Lindsay Duncan, play the embattled exes Elyot and Amanda—dandies of detachment who jilt their new spouses and run away together to a Parisian love nest. The play's emotional and structural minimalism turns all the cumbersome proprieties of English drawing-room drama upside down, and Rickman and Duncan have a field day with Coward's nuanced silences, with all the verbal tics and physical revelations of repressed feeling. Howard Davies's radical notion is to play Elyot and Amanda's physical passion for real, rather than opting for the standard notional sexual allure. This allows him to capitalize on the wonderful chemistry between Rickman and Duncan, but it also throws the comedy weirdly off kilter. (5/6/02) (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 307-4100.)

QED
Peter Parnell's play, starring Alan Alda as the physicist Richard Feynman, buzzes with life. Set in 1986—the year of the Challenger explosion, whose causes Feynman helped to investigate—"QED" takes us through an afternoon and evening in Feynman's office at Caltech, where he talks about such subjects as photons, drumming, the Manhattan Project, cancer, and "South Pacific." Alda's performance, which makes much use of that scrunchy-eyed smile of his, is one of utter charm. Sundays and Mondays only. (11/26/01) (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

READING HEBRON
A Canadian Jew tries to make sense of the Hebron Massacre, in a play by Jason Sherman. (Access Theatre, 380 Broadway, at White St. 206-1515. Closes May 25.)

RICKY JAY: ON THE STEM
The master magician's tribute to the flimflammery and weird entertainments that have cropped up over the years along the length of Broadway, "the stem that winds the watch" of New York City. Working six hundred and forty-two steps (he counted them) from the flea museum that used to be in Times Square, Jay re-creates such flea feats as Ophelia's death and Samson's destruction of the Temple of the Philistines. There are also card tricks that amaze and astonish, all performed with a charming smile by the president of the international brotherhood of snake-oil salesmen. Prepare to be happily hornswoggled. (Unfortunately, Jay has decreed that that no one under sixteen will be admitted to his show, thereby dousing an opportunity to spark who knows how many receptive pubescent imaginations.) Directed by David Mamet. (Second Stage, 307 W. 43rd St. 246-4422.)

THE SANDMAN
Target Margin Theatre's new opera starts with a rather large man singing something in German. A stagehand steps forward to translate, then it all starts over again, in English. Having neatly fulfilled and then confounded one's expectations, the show (composed by Thomas Cabaniss, with a libretto by Douglas Langworthy, David Herskovits, and Mr. Cabaniss) goes on in the company's smart, knowing way. It offers a moving version of E. T. A. Hoffmann's story about a young man haunted by his father's death. It's also a funny deconstruction of how operas are put together. Under the gifted direction of Mr. Herskovits, the performances and voices are strong. (Connelly Theatre, 220 E. 4th St. 358-3657.)

SURVIVING GRACE
A play by Trish Vradenburg, about a fraught mother-and-daughter relationship. Illeana Douglas and Doris Belack star. Jack Hofsiss directs. (Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. 307-7171.)

SWEET SMELL OF SUCCESS
At first glance, this new musical, adapted from the excellent Clifford Odets–Ernest Lehman movie (1957) by a high-powered artistic team headed by the director Nicholas Hytner, seems to have got it right. The New York gossip columnist Walter Winchell's insatiable, driven personality makes him perfect material for the Broadway musical (he was the inspiration for the character J. J. Hunsecker, played by the expert John Lithgow). Unfortunately, the wit of John Guare's book is not sustained in Marvin Hamlisch's soft, undistinguished score and Craig Carnelia's flat lyrics. (3/25/02) (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

3 DARK TALES
The international company Theatre O's "tragicomedy in three movements," about the deteriorating lives of some office workers. (45 Bleecker, 45 Bleecker St. 307-4100.)

THOROUGHLY MODERN MILLIE
A 1967 Hollywood version of the Roaring Twenties—which starred Julie Andrews as an ingenue flapper who comes to New York City, finds true love, and helps break up a Chinese-run white-slavery ring—reimagined for the stage in 2002. Just like the movie, it's supposed to be all madcap Jazz Age fizziness, but the harder the cast sings and dances, the flatter the enterprise falls. The colors seem garish rather than gay, the manic energy feels forced at gunpoint, and the only thing you recall about Sutton Foster's Millie after you leave the theatre is her huge white teeth and bouncy black bob. Call it thoroughly boring, shrilly. (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.)

TOPDOG/UNDERDOG
The Public Theatre's production of Suzan-Lori Parks's play has moved to Broadway, starring Jef-

frey Wright and Mos Def. George C. Wolfe is the director. (Ambassador, 219 W. 49th St. 239-6200.)

21 DOG YEARS: DOING TIME@AMAZON.COM
In his solo show, Mike Daisey exposes life at the online giant during its early years. (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 239-6200.)

VIENNA LUSTHAUS (REVISITED)
Martha Clarke, Charles L. Mee, and Richard Peaslee's revised version of their 1986 collaboration, a multimedia exploration of Vienna in the early twentieth century. (New York Theatre Workshop, 79 E. 4th St. 239-6200.)

LONG RUNS

AIDA
Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4747.

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST
Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 307-4747.

BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES
Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370.

CABARET
Studio 54, at 254 W. 54th St. 239-6200.

CHICAGO
Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200.

THE COMPLETE WORKS OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (ABRIDGED)
Century Center, 111 E. 15th St. 239-6200.

TABLES FOR TWO

WASHINGTON PARK
24 Fifth Ave. (529-4400)—After a decade in culinary limbo, Jonathan Waxman, whose restaurant Jams was a New American pacesetter in the nineteen-eighties, is back as the chief attraction at a casually elegant new place that features all the innovations of twenty years ago—a wide-open kitchen (where he works in plain view); clean, modern décor; and food that combines seasonal freshness with a minimum of classical fuss. Washington Park's menu changes daily, but with Waxman putting his personal imprimatur on every dish it has already reached the consistency of a restaurant that's been around for years.

Not that there aren't a few kinks to be addressed. Despite its Jamesian location north of Washington Square, the multilevelled dining area, which surrounds a clangorous bar, has the acoustics of a soup kitchen. (When asked to send someone over with advice about the beautifully chosen wine list, the hostess thought a recent diner wanted to talk about Somalia.) In the chef's desire to edit everything down to essentials, a pairing of breaded "veal Milan" with a bed of undressed baby arugula conjured up nothing more poetic than a cow's day of munching. But, on the whole, the Waxman approach shows a master's sense of what can be done by restricting the harmony among animals and vegetables to just three or four parts. An earthy dish of breaded sweetbreads and morels was lightened by a Malmsey sauce. Shrimp with tangy spring garlic nested in angel-hair pasta. Soft-shell crabs topped a field of mizuna surrounded by red mustard. When it comes to color, Waxman seems to have Redon in mind, especially in a salad of Valencia oranges, red and white beets, and amaranth, which looked almost too good to eat. For foodies with long memories, the Waxman signature dishes are still here: a starter of red-pepper pancakes, topped with smoked salmon, caviar, and crème fraîche, that gives new meaning to "mouth-filling," and a grilled organic chicken with French fries that remains a New American object lesson in how to achieve both moistness and crispness without a hint of grease. (Open Mondays through Saturdays for dinner. Entrées $24-$32.)

—*Charles Michener*

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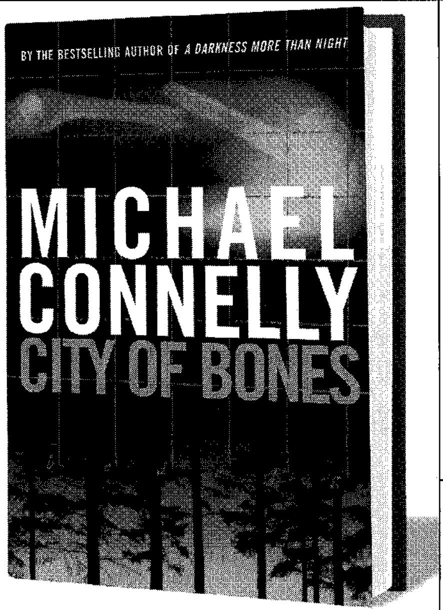

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—Jack Nessel, *Los Angeles Times Book Review* (COVER REVIEW)

"A taut mini-drama in which even minor characters...play standout roles that burn with conviction."
—Marilyn Stasio, *The New York Times Book Review*

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Daryl Roth, 20 Union Sq. E., at 15th St. 239-6200.

FORBIDDEN BROADWAY: 20TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION
Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.

42ND STREET
Ford Center, 213 W. 42nd St. 307-4100.

THE FULL MONTY
Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 239-6200.

I LOVE YOU, YOU'RE PERFECT, NOW CHANGE
Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200.

THE LION KING
New Amsterdam, 214 W. 42nd St. 307-4100.

LES MISÉRABLES
Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200.

LOVE, JANIS
Village Theatre, 158 Bleecker St. 307-4100.

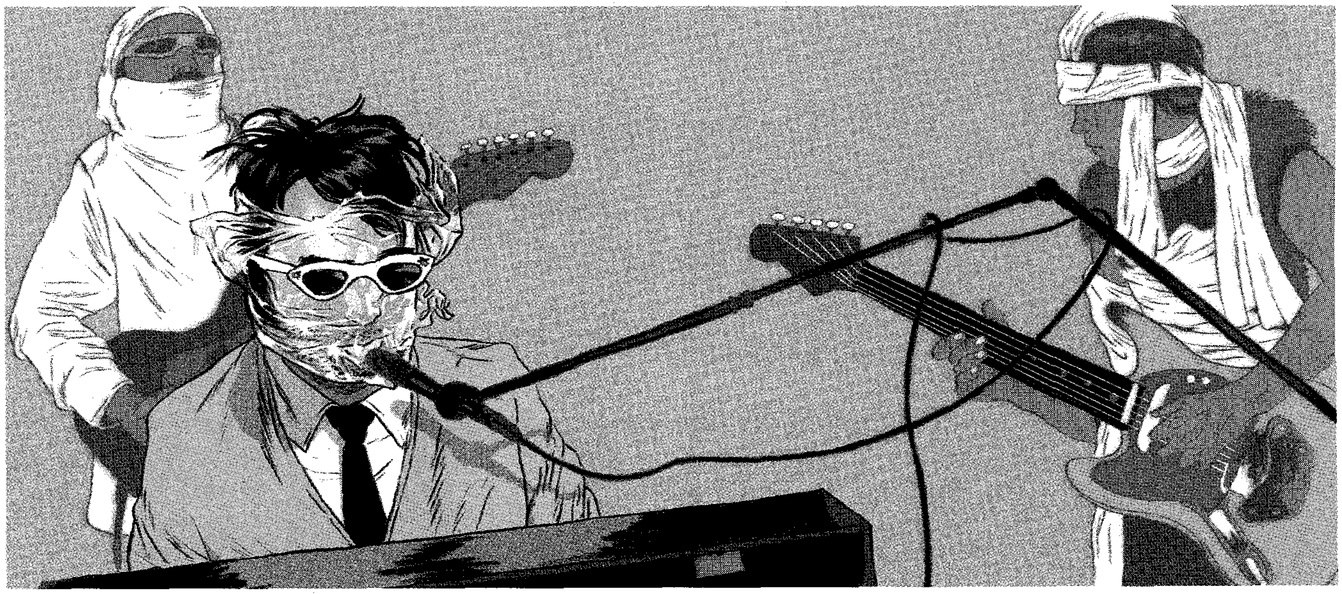
PERFECT CRIME
Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401.

THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200.

THE PRODUCERS
St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.

PROOF
Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.

PUPPETRY OF THE PENIS
John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.



The eccentric singer Gary Wilson returns to New York City for the first time in twenty-three years for a night at Joe's Pub.

TOMER HANUKA

RENT
Nederlander, 208 W. 41st St. 921-8000.

STOMP
Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 477-2477.

THE SYRINGA TREE
Playhouse 91, at 316 E. 91st St. 307-4100.

THE TALE OF THE ALLERGIST'S WIFE
Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200.

TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING
St. Luke's Church, 308 W. 46th St. 239-6200.

UNDERNEATH THE LINTEL
Soho Playhouse, 15 Vandam St.

URINETOWN
Henry Miller, 124 W. 43rd St. 239-6200.

THE VAGINA MONOLOGUES
Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200.

DANCE

NEW YORK CITY BALLET
Albert Evans, a principal dancer with the company and a fledgling choreographer, knew about John Cage before a couple of summers ago, but it was only then, at a Cunningham show, that he heard his music, and ran out to buy "every Cage CD I could find at Tower." What he seems to have heard in the Cage he chose for this sextet, at least—the languid whistles, majestic rattles, and exclamatory bouquet of bells—is permission. Evans invents mainly in an unfancy, observant key. His menagerie of novel partnerings distills the strange beauty of bird flight or cat crouch into translucent geometries. Members of the exuberant new-music ensemble Essential Music share the stage with the dancers, who are headed up by the Brandoesque soloist Sébastien Marcovici—here, Evans says, "a quiet panther on his land." May 15 at 8: "Serenade," "Vespro," and "Vienna Waltzes." ♦ May 16 at 8: "Prism," the première of Albert Evans's new work (unnamed at press time), and "Symphony in C." ♦ May 17 at 8: "Kammermusik No. 2," "Tchaikovsky Pas de Deux," "Mozartiana," and "Stravinsky Violin Concerto." ♦ May 18 at 2: "Hallelujah Junction," "Opus 19/The Dreamer," and "Symphony in C." ♦ May 18 at 8: "Prodigal Son," "Viola Alone," "Tchaikovsky Pas de Deux," and "Vienna Waltzes." ♦ May 19 at 3: "Mozartiana," the new Evans ballet, and "Prism." ♦ May 21 at 7:30: "Kammermusik No. 2," "Tchaikovsky Pas de Deux," the new Evans ballet, and "Prism." (New York State Theatre. 870-5570. Through June 30.)

AMERICAN BALLET THEATRE
May 15-18 at 8: "Onegin." ♦ May 18 at 11:30: A family matinée. ♦ May 20 at 8: "Theme and Variations," "Tchaikovsky Pas de Deux," "Nutcracker Pas de Deux," "Rose Adagio," and "Sleeping Beauty, Act III." ♦ May 21 at 8: "Theme and Variations," "Walk This Way," "Tchaikovsky Pas de Deux," and "Sleeping Beauty, Act III." (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000. Through July 6.)

COMPAGNIE KÄFIG
Until recently this sweet troupe of French hip-hoppers, from the largely immigrant outskirts of Lyon, couldn't seem to get over how weird it was to be joint-popping, head-spinning, arm-noodling, and rapping through a surgical tube (like a singing banana slug) for the culture-house crowd. "Käfig" means "cage" in Arabic, and the company's first evening-length work, created in 1996, featured a ballerina in a cage and hip-hoppers outside. In its second work, "Recital," the guys performed their break dances armed with violins. But with "Dix Versions" (a French pun), Compagnie Käfig has relaxed. " 'Dix Versions' is simple choreography," says the artistic director, Mourad Merzouki, "in primary colors." (Dance Theatre Workshop at the Joyce, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. May 14 at 8, May 15 at 7, May 16-18 at 8, and May 19 at 2.)

TERE O'CONNOR DANCE
"The first thing about dance is that it's voiceless," the choreographer says. "That's the drama inherent in the form." After a four-year foray into dances with talk, O'Connor returns this season with two pieces that are palpably and profoundly mute. O'Connor says, "I'm trying to find a symbolism that is more ample than words." (Danspace Project, St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 674-8194. May 16-18 at 8:30 and May 19 at 7:30.)

DANCE THEATRE OF HARLEM
The company returns home to perform repertory works. (Apollo Theatre, 253 W. 125th St. 531-5305. May 17 at 7:30, May 18 at 2 and 7:30, and May 19 at 3.)

KAYE PLAYHOUSE
May 16 at 8: An evening of music and dance from Seville, with Rafael Campallo and Choni Pérez. (Park Ave. at 68th St. 772-4448.)

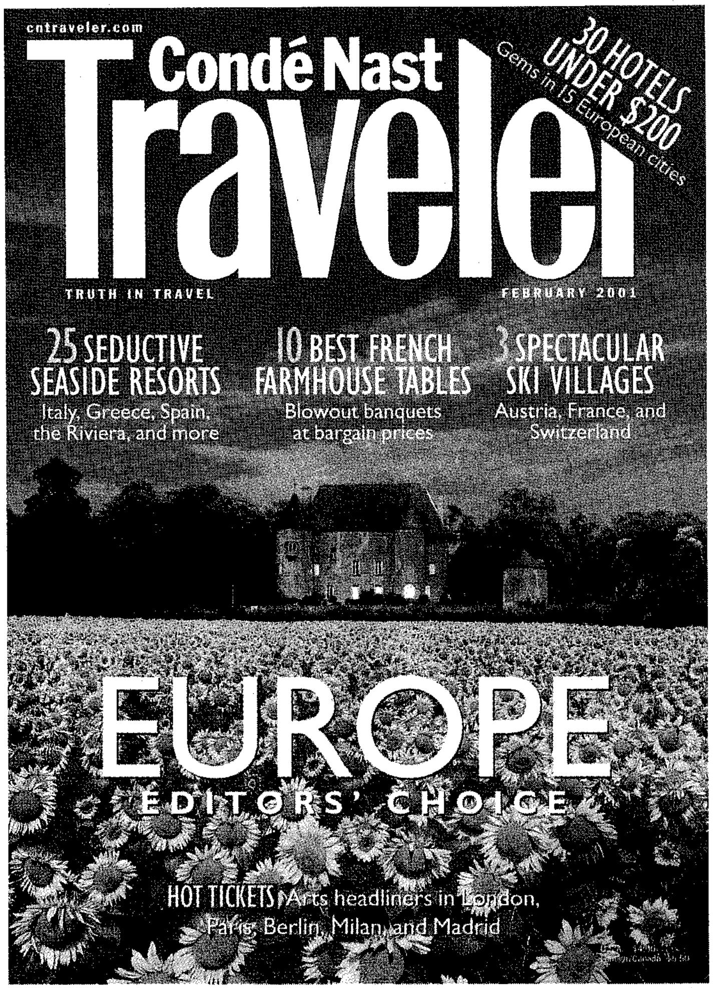
NIGHT LIFE
CONCERTS

FISCHERSPOONER
This local art-rock act at the vanguard of the eighties revival combines drum-machine beats with simple bass lines and elaborate theatrical productions. It's a formula that's earned the performance-shy duo an expanding cult following and a reported two-million-pound deal with England's Ministry of Sound label. (Deitch Projects, 18 Wooster St. For more information, e-mail fischerspooner@deitch.com. May 15-17 at 8 and 10.)

JAZZ COMPOSERS COLLECTIVE
In its decade-long existence, the Jazz Composers Collective has morphed from being a scrappy fringe unit into a mainstay of the city's musical life. **Ben Allison and Medicine Wheel** and the **Ron Horton** quartet, two of the coöperative's more intriguing new-jazz ensembles, share a bill. Medicine Wheel is powered by the leader's bantering bass work and his adventurous writing, which gives the saxophonists Ted Nash and Michael Blake and the pianist Frank Kimbrough plenty to sink their teeth into. The trumpeter Ron Horton bolsters his own bold work with support from Allison and the pianist Ethan Iverson. (New School, 55 W. 13th St. For more information, call 995-1552. May 16 at 8.)

"EDDIE BERT RETURNS TO TOWN HALL"
Town Hall has loomed large in the legend of the trombonist Bert, who, in a career stretching back to the swing era and extending to the present day, performed historic concerts here with such major figures as Red Norvo, Charles Mingus, and Thelonious Monk. Cheering on this Zelig-like utility player on the occasion of his eightieth birthday are the George Gee All-Star Orchestra, the brassman Clark Terry, the saxophonist Loren Schoenberg, and fellow-trombonists Slide Hampton, Benny Powell, and Wycliffe Gordon. (123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. May 16 at 8.)

PURE PLEASURE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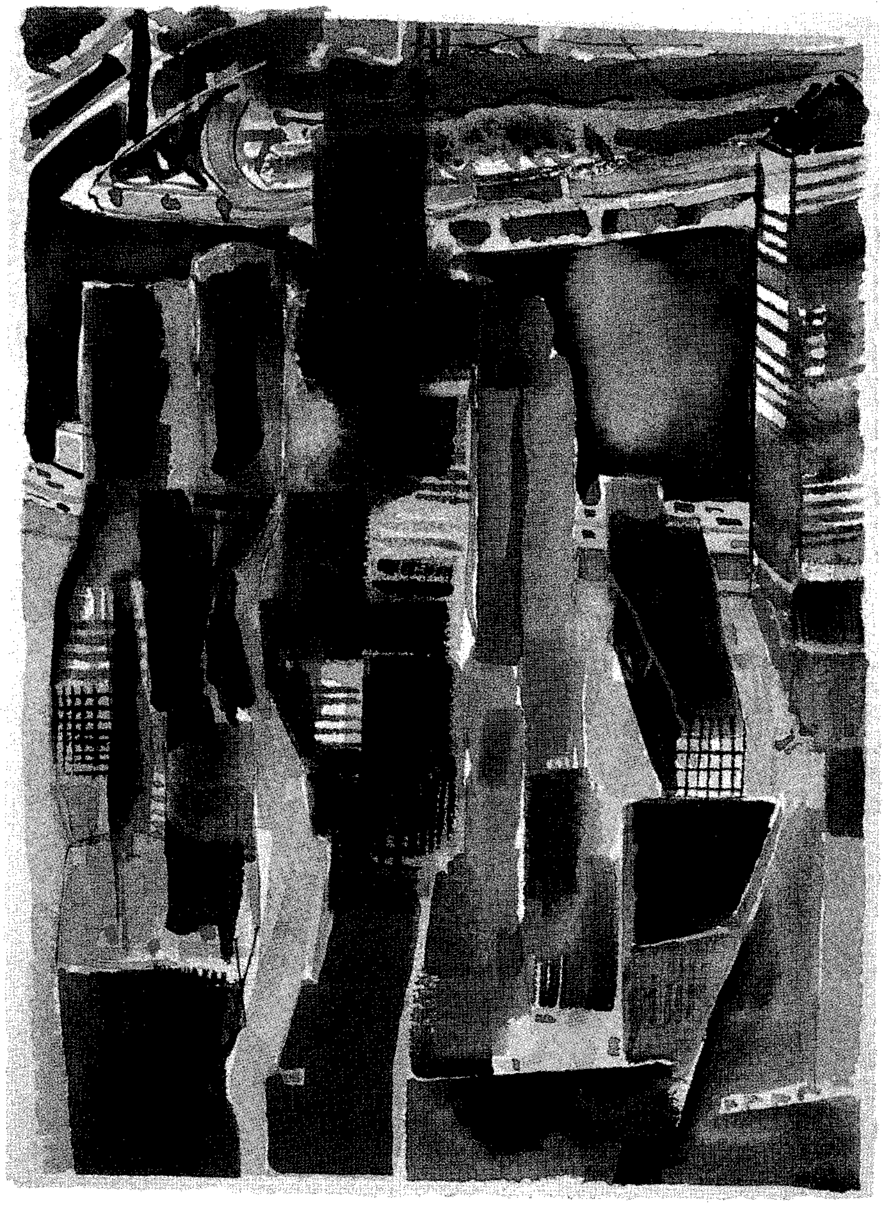

"Night: Looking East, 9.17.00," by Jacqueline Gourevitch, at DFN.

JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER
The Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra flies down to Rio, in spirit at least, as it celebrates the carnival music of Brazil with the assistance of the percussionist Cyro Baptista and a samba ensemble. For musical director and New Orleans expat Wynton Marsalis, it's just an exultant extension of Mardi Gras. (Alice Tully Hall. 721-6500. May 17-18 at 8.)

THE CRANBERRIES
It may be too early to call Ireland's Cranberries a nineties nostalgia act, but it's a fair bet that the crowd at this show will want to hear the winsome pop of their early hits rather than the progressive-rock-oriented sounds of more recent years. The band, which is fronted by the singer Dolores O'Riordan (a sort of more user-friendly Sinead O'Connor), turned from the Smiths- and Cocteau Twins-inspired sounds of its 1993 début to work with the Aerosmith producer Bruce Fairbairn on 1996's "To the Dearly Departed." In subsequent releases, including last year's "Wake Up and Smell the Coffee," they attempted to return to the source of their original success, but the bloom was off the Irish rose. (Hammerstein Ballroom, Manhattan Center, 311 W. 34th St. 307-7171. May 18 at 8.)

PETE YORN
Touted as the living, breathing Next Big Thing, Yorn is a young singer-songwriter in the fine tradition of Elliott Smith and the late Jeff Buckley who mines a middle ground between folksy troubadourisms and impassioned rock hooks. That he's already scored a film (the Jim Carrey vehicle "Me, Myself & Irene") and had his music played in an episode of "Dawson's Creek" is a decent indication of his trajectory. His smoldering good looks don't hurt either. (Hammerstein Ballroom. May 20 at 8.)

CLUBS

Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.

B. B. KING BLUES CLUB & GRILL
237 W. 42nd St. (997-4144)—May 19: **Hank Williams III**, the grandson of country music's greatest legend, may have done time in punk bands during his youth, but he stays true to his roots with his latest album, "Lovesick, Broke & Driftin'."

BOWERY BALLROOM
6 Delancey St. (533-2111)—May 17-18: **Bright Eyes.** Though he's only in his early twenties, the Nebraskan Conor Oberst has been making albums for years. With his breaking quaver of a voice, he explores crushing and precious unhappiness. Although in recent live shows Oberst has tended, distressingly, to try on the attitudes of a rock star, his obvious talents bear watching.

BROWNIES
169 Avenue A, at 10th St. (420-8392)—May 16: **Spokane** performs slow and simply orchestrated songs with a minimal percussion kit, finger-picked guitar, and the odd violin, with the singer Rick Alverson delivering his exceptionally strong lyrics as if they've gotten caught in the back of his throat. May 17: **John Vanderslice's** new album, "Life and Death of an American Fourtracker," tells the story of a lonely obsessive who spends most of his time in a basement with elementary recording equipment. In real life, Vanderslice runs a more advanced, though still analog, recording studio in San Francisco. The warm arrangements of his music underpin bleak themes. May 18: The former dB's drummer **Will Rigby** shares the bill with Mark Rozzo's sturdy ensemble **Champale** and the local indie-rockers in the **National.**

IRVING PLAZA
17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—May 15: The **Cowboy Junkies** remain a beloved and influential force in the alternative-country community thanks to their penchant for languid atmospherics and vocalist Margot Timmins's smoky delivery. May 16: The singer-songwriter **Dan Bern.** With **Clem Snide.** May 17-18: The **Jon Spencer Blues Explosion.** Those Detroit upstarts known as the White Stripes may have pilfered a bit of their thunder recently, but New York's own savage trio blazes forth undaunted, with "Plastic Fang," their eighth album of hyperkinetic rock. It's a return to form compared to its predecessor, the electronica-laced "Acme," as Spencer and company mutate the blues with rollicking funk and incendiary guitar abuse.

JOE'S PUB
425 Lafayette St. (539-8777)—May 15: Twenty-five years ago, thanks to a jazz-musician dad, a teen-age encounter with the composer John Cage, and a personality inclined toward strange habits (rolling in flour and magnetic recording tape, for example), **Gary Wilson** emerged from his parents' basement in Endicott, New York, with a home-recorded album, "You Think You Really Know Me," that went on to become the "Leaves of Grass" of the indie-rock underground—a highly influential and revolutionary vanity effort. Wilson's funky keyboards, creepy effects, and cheesy fills inspired everyone from Beck to "Simpsons" creator Matt Groening, but his career never took off, and he ended up playing lounge music and working in a pornographic bookstore. He returns to mark the rerelease of his 1977 album. May 16-18: The **Kronos Quartet** (see Classical Music).

MERCURY LOUNGE
217 E. Houston St. (260-4700)—May 15: The French producer and part-time Air bassist **Bertrand Burgalat** makes a rare Stateside appearance.

TONIC
107 Norfolk St. (358-7501)—May 17: The San Francisco quintet **Sleepytime Gorilla Museum** drops by for a midnight romp.

VILLAGE UNDERGROUND
130 W. 3rd St. (777-7745)—May 15: The singer-songwriter **Michelle Shocked** returns with songs from her new release, the two-disk set "Deep Natural."

WARSAW
261 Driggs Ave., Brooklyn (718-387-5252)—May 17: **Sleater-Kinney**, the critically acclaimed all-female, post-punk trio out of Olympia, Washington. May 21: By taking the guitar in new and occasionally dissonant directions, Scotland's **Mogwai** practices a blend of experimental post-rock that makes Radiohead sound as adventurous as Bon Jovi. Largely eschewing vocals, Mogwai explores both high-volume assaults and fragile periods of near-silence, often within the space of a single song.

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

ALGONQUIN HOTEL
59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—Through May 25: Too young to be labelled the grande dame of cabaret, but still reigning over her dominion like a benevolent queen, **Karen Akers** brings with her a surfeit of sophistication, verve, and glamour. Dining.

BIRDLAND
315 W. 44th St. (581-3080)—May 16-18: The **Gonzalo Rubalcaba** trio. Learning that the warm and

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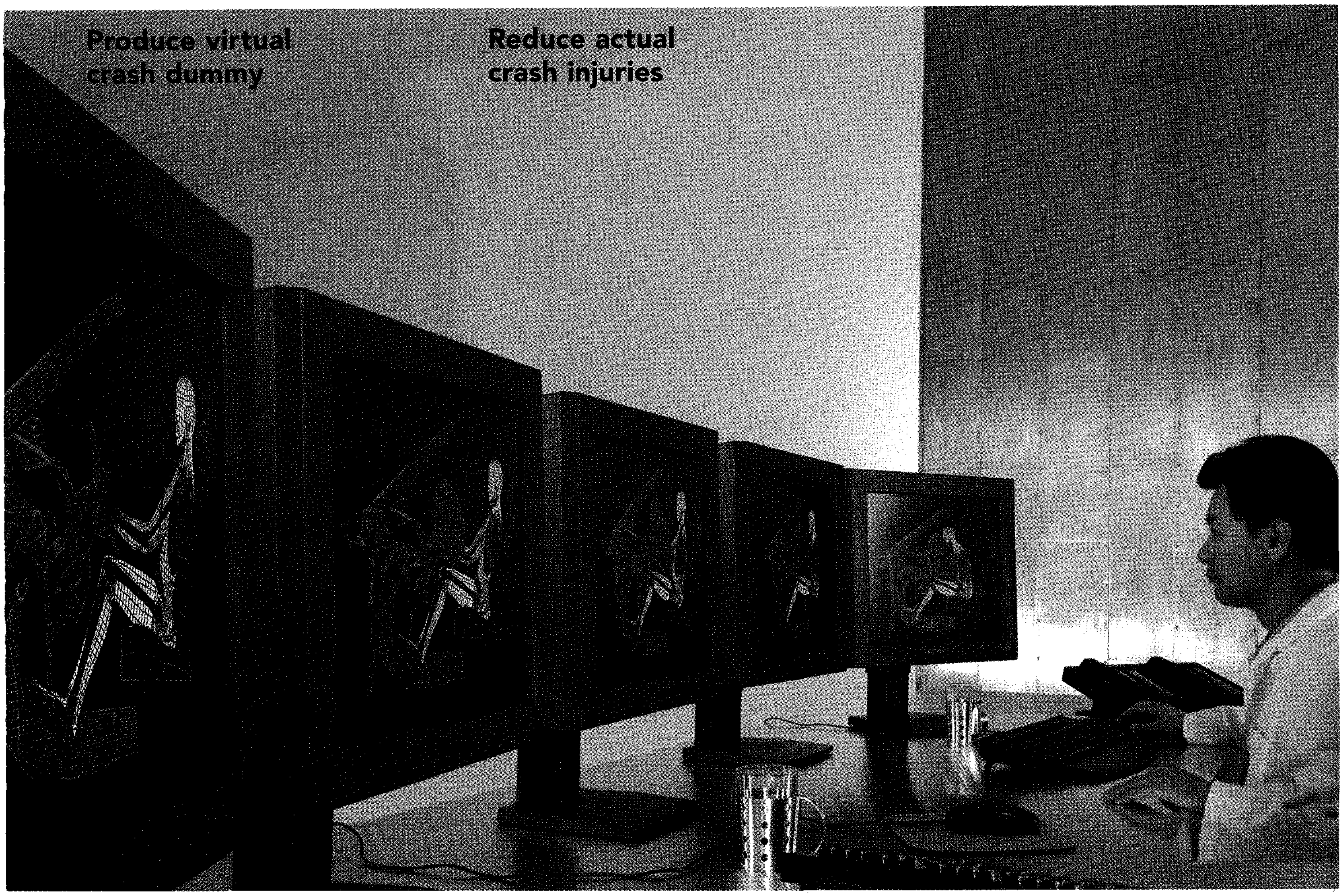

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sparing piano drifting hazily about Charlie Haden's most recent album, "Nocturne," is the work of Rubalcaba can come as quite a shock to those who remember the early U.S. releases of this reformed keyboard abuser. Though the Cuban virtuoso once crammed in forty notes when four were called for, he now savors the joys of concision, and everyone wins. Dining.

BLUE NOTE
131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Through May 19: The mainstream jazz-piano deity **Kenny Barron** also harbors a fondness for Brazilian music, which reveals itself here in a performance with the Trio da Paz. Sharing this intriguing bill is the violinist **Regina Carter** and her quintet. "Free Fall," Carter's duet album with Barron, was one of last year's more congenial recordings.

CARLYLE HOTEL
Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The Café Carlyle, a snug, windowless enclave in the doorman district, features discreet waiters, wraparound murals, and the magisterially puckish **Bobby Short.**

IRIDIUM
1650 Broadway, at 51st St. (582-2121)—Through May 19: At seventy-nine, **Von Freeman** might be jazz's most adventurous tenor saxophonist. The Chicago-based iconoclast has spent a lifetime learning and then breaking every rule—conventional conceptions of tone, rhythm, and harmony don't mean a thing to him. When he and his offspring **Chico**—an exceptional tenor player himself—get together, the father often comes off as the avant eccentric and the son as the well-mannered conservative. A more propitious matchup of creativity and swing can't be found. Mondays belong to the electric-guitar innovator **Les Paul.**

JAZZ STANDARD
116 E. 27th St. (576-2232)—May 16-19: The **Denny Zeitlin** trio. A pianist's pianist, and a long-time psychiatrist to boot, Zeitlin is fondly remembered for his occasional engagements, stretching back to the sixties, with the bassist Charlie Haden, and for writing "Quiet Now," a gorgeous ballad that Bill Evans turned into a standard. A resident of the West Coast, Zeitlin is too little heard in these parts. Dining.

KNITTING FACTORY
74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—May 17-18: **Ethan Iverson.** The inclusive and imaginative jazz pianist Iverson, whose day job involves directing the music for Mark Morris's dance company, breaks out on his own. With his Bad Plus trio, featuring the bassist Reid Anderson and the drummer David King, he deconstructs a wide range of material, from ABBA ("Knowing Me, Knowing You") to Nirvana ("Smells Like Teen Spirit") to Rodgers and Hart ("Blue Moon").

VILLAGE VANGUARD
178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—Through May 19: The **Fred Hersch** trio. With his exquisite touch, sensitivity to texture, and poetic imagination, Hersch has become one of the great romantics of jazz piano. He's also cultivated an expansive repertoire that embraces composers from Richard Rodgers and Alex North to Billy Strayhorn and Ornette Coleman. In Hersch's hands such eclecticism is as natural—and as life-affirming—as breathing. The **Vanguard Jazz Orchestra** holds sway on Mondays.

ART
MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (879-5500)—**"Tapestry in the Renaissance: Art and Magnificence."** The aptly titled show features forty-one sumptuous examples of magnificence woven between 1420 and 1560, including "The Unicorn Defends Itself," from the Met's own Cloisters, along with three panels from the ten-part "Acts of the Apostles," designed by Raphael for the Sistine Chapel, and all four sections of the "Alba Passion" cycle, shown together here for the first time since 1877. Through June 19. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

ON AND OFF THE AVENUE
Garage Sale

24 HOURS
THE GARAGE ANTIQUES & COLLECTIBLES
SATURDAYS & SUNDAYS

"I've been standing out here in my underwear for thirteen years," says Illisa, the preëminent vintage-lingerie vender at the **GARAGE** (112 W. 25th St.; 647-0707), the beloved weekends-only haunt in the heart of Chelsea's antiques and collectibles neighborhood. Though she's set up in a damp fluorescent-lit parking lot that can at best be described as dingy, Illisa's salmon-pink nighties and ethereal chemises ($60 to $125) are nothing if not pristine. On this damp spring afternoon, the dealer, who frequently works on plays and films—she has supplied several generations of "Cabaret" Kit Kat girls with tap pants—is wearing a tie-dyed bias-cut slip under a nineteen-thirties denim barn jacket. Illisa may deal exclusively in what used to be called unmentionables, but she has at least one thing in common with her fellow Garage dealers: she's as hopped up today about her wares as she was when she stepped into her first silk-chiffon teddy. "Actually, I get more excited about finding a really good nightgown now than I did when I started," she says, fondling a stack of prewar cotton stockings.

Around the corner from Illisa, Barbara Muccio, the proprietor of a business she calls Interesting Old Things, says, no, she hasn't been to Britain in a great many years, but, yes, lots of other people have told her that her collection of faux-tortoise loupes and sterling tea strainers, glass marbles and mid-century fountain pens, reminds them of an English antique seller's stall. "I just sell things that I resonate with—things that give me that aesthetic thrum," Muccio says. Particularly thrum-worthy is a heavily hallmarked, velvet-lined silver eyeglass case, monogrammed "TS" and dated 1928, that hails from Finland ($165). Muccio has placed a pair of antique spectacles inside, but she says that these days people employ old cases like this in creative ways, including as evening purses and paper-clip holders. When a fuchsia-haired woman stops by to sigh over the charms dangling from a fifty-odd-year-old bracelet, Muccio makes a comment that could apply as well to much of the merchandise at the Garage: "They're not all in mint condition, but they are delightful."

Arby Rolband, the resident paper expert on the Garage's upper level, used to have a shop in New Jersey. Then, around 1980, he began braving the elements at an outdoor flea market on Twenty-sixth Street and noticed that "while I was complaining, the money was coming in." Rolband, who has longish hair and still looks a little like the history major he once was, describes his stock as "old prints, old books, ephemera, and the occasional object, with an emphasis on scientific things—anatomical, botanical, and architectural—oh, and theatrical too. Anything people want to hang on their walls." There's certainly enough to pick from: a brief rifle through the booth turns up an unframed print of a three-toed sloth, a French fashion plate entitled "Le Follet Courrier de Salon," a flowered flyleaf torn from *Sartain's Union Magazine of Literature and Art*, and a collection of "Certificates of Merit" intended for nineteenth-century schoolchildren ($5 each). Hanging on a column behind Rolband, who looks as comfortable as a guy at work has ever looked, is a poster, still bright, for a long-ago production of something entitled "The White Slaver" ($600), which bears the legend "Rags are royal raiment when worn for virtue's sake."

—*Lynn Yaeger*

MARCELLUS HALL

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—**"Gerhard Richter: Forty Years of Painting."** Through May 21. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, and Thursdays, 10:30 to 5:45; Fridays, 10:30 to 8:15.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (423-3500)—**"Brazil: Body and Soul."** Through May 29. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 9 to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, 9 to 8.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART
Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-3676)—The 2002 Biennial is a vast, pleasant, rather drab affair, made up of predominantly earnest, unambitious works by a hundred and thirteen artists and collaborative teams on four floors of the museum and in Central Park, where you can find a fifty-foot steel elm tree. The show's New Age-ish curator Lawrence R. Rinder declares that today's young American artists crave "some greater role than mere decoration or ironic critique." His Biennial bunch achieves something decidedly lesser, on the whole, with gimmicky audio and computer works, self-indulgent installations, and a great many unsurprising video projections. ("Vita brevis, video longa," one observer remarked.) Serious painting and sculpture are scarce. Momentary relief arrives in the form of memorable pieces by Vija Celmins, Chan Chao, Stephen Dean, and Lorna Simpson. Through May 26. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, and weekends, 11 to 6; Fridays, 1 to 9.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM AT PHILIP MORRIS
120 Park Ave., at 42nd St. (878-2550)—For "Five by Five," the museum invited five young artists to select a contemporary work from its collection and create a piece of their own in response. (Contemporary is defined here as post-1985.) Four of the choices are predictably fashionable—Kelley, Ray, Sachs, and Wool—which may say as much about the museum's holdings as it does about the artists' apparent myopia. The one exception, an American flag immersed in preservatives by Donald Lipski in 1991, also makes for the most ambitious response, a teetering installation by Rina Banerjee, combining tiny flags, a gold shrine, a big parasol, cocktail umbrellas, feathers, and an electric fan. According to the artist, it's a symbolic representation of Manhattan. Both Lipski and Banerjee conflate the poetic and the political with witty, if less than subtle, results. Through July 5. (Open weekdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 7:30.)

JEWISH MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 92nd St. (423-3200)—**"Mirroring Evil: Nazi Imagery/Recent Art,"** an exhibition of works that rely on Nazi-era imagery, created by popular young artists such as Elke Krystufek, Mat Collishaw, and Tom Sachs, lets museumgoers debate whether the pieces are closer to "Shoah" or show-and-tell. Through June 30. ♦ **"New York: Capital of Photography"** offers an exhilarating archive of New York street life, seen through the lenses of people like Hine, Strand, Shahn, Model, Weegee, Winogrand, and Goldin. The hundred-some pictures are hung in thoughtful chronological groupings, but the show is best enjoyed picture by picture, as a feast of bizarre microhappenings. On every wall, the magic of technology catches ordinary New Yorkers in the middle of things—sentence, sip, scratch, sob, air kiss. Organized by a fellow street photographer and critic, Max Kozloff, the show comes with a handsome and daring catalogue, in which Kozloff, following a tip from William Klein, boils down the difference between Jewish and goyish photography. Guess which group is characterized by a "personal reticence blended into an aura of entitlement"? Through Sept. 2. (Open Sundays 10 to 5:45, Mondays through Wednesdays, 11 to 5:45, and Thursdays, 11 to 8.)

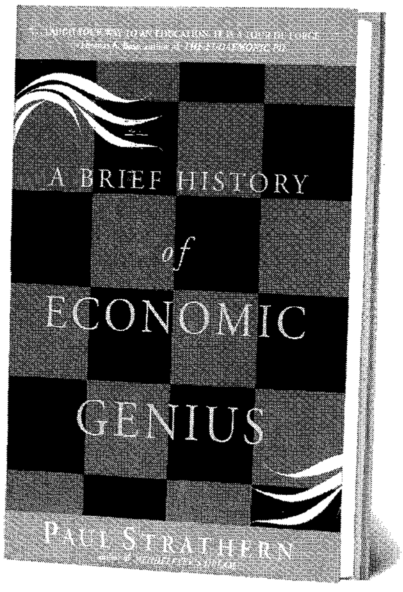
NATIONAL ACADEMY MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (369-4880)—The Academy's annual exhibition, usually a genteel backwater of representational styles, has suddenly made a dramatic leap into Chelsea-style contemporaneity: it's a pleasant shock to find the galleries lined with work by people like Sarah Sze, Lisa Yuskavage, James Siena, and Tom Friedman. The Academy hasn't entirely dropped its preference for skill and tradition, but the over-all mix feels freshly sensible, and there are terrific individual pieces by representational painters like John Moore, Mark Greenwold, Helen Miranda Wilson, and Katy Schneider. As a snapshot of recent art, it's a little staid and modest, but a cut above any recent Whitney Biennial. Through June 9. (Open Wednesdays through Thursdays, and Saturdays and Sundays, noon to 5, and Fridays, 10 to 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.

MAURIZIO CATTELAN
Does the Italian trickster's unsettling "Frank & Jamie"—two lifelike mannequins of New York City housing policemen standing on their heads against a wall—mock the Finest and make light of September 11th? One might think so by taking the figures as twin towers, their inversion as a death symbol, and their jolly-cop personalities as malicious caricature. But the work may also be deemed friendly and charming—and, after all, it's "only art." The emotional effect of Cattelan's provocation is typically dicey. Does the work liberate us from naïve equations of art and life, or does it run afoul of a heartfelt compunction like that of Theodor Adorno? The German critic held that lyric poetry after Auschwitz should be taboo. Through June 15. (Marian Goodman, 24 W. 57th St. 977-7160.)

RACHEL FEINSTEIN
Picture a Skittles commercial set in the Italian Baroque and you get an idea of the confectionery sculpture installed in Sotheby's nine-story atrium. (It's the second site-specific commission by a young artist in a series produced in part by the Art Production Fund.) Rainbow stripes line the arched footpath of



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—*Salon.com*

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the bridge, whose gilded surface is decorated with glass bubbles, twining serpents, and biomorphic bulges that invoke the gold-painted objects of Yayoi Kusama. The work doesn't command much attention from below, but up close it feels like the rebellious daughter of the Bridge of Sighs. Through Sept. 1. (Sotheby's, 72nd St. at York Ave. 606-7000.)

KIKI OF MONTPARNASSE
Kiki is best known as the muse of Man Ray (he transformed her back into a violin in one notorious photograph), but she modelled for everyone from Calder to Leger. (That's her fragmented face in Leger's "Ballet Mécanique," being screened at Anthology Film Archives in conjunction with this show.) Ernest Hemingway wrote the introduction to her memoirs; a copy is displayed in a vitrine gallery alongside an image from a Man Ray book that could make Mapplethorpe blush. Also on view are a group of Kiki's guileless, colorful paintings, bucolic scenes that sold out when first exhibited in Paris, in 1927. Through May 24. (Zabriskie, 41 E. 57th St. 752-1223.)

JIM PETERS
As usual, the Provincetown artist's libidinous reveries look vaguely derivative and irritatingly self-indulgent, yet alluring. "Truro Afternoon," the finest new painting in this grab bag of recent and older work, shows a woman wearing only a tank top napping on a mattress, while a small child lies on the floor below. The familial implications offset the voyeurism a little too neatly, but it doesn't matter, because the grayish, shuttered half-light in the room is the painting's real achievement. Through June 30. (CDS, 76 E. 79th St. 772-9555.)

"Happy Childhood," by Lisa Kereszi, at Pierogi.

"HAIR STORIES"
Ruth Marten, an artist who paints nothing but fanciful coiffures, has curated this lavish assortment of real, synthetic, and surreal hair styles, or representations thereof. The blondes catch your attention first: William Hogarth's "The Five Orders of Perriwig as They Were Worn at the Late Coronation" complements the blow-dried plumage of John Waters's "Farrah" and Paul Pfeiffer's bizarre basilica of Barbie tresses. But the brunettes—especially the gleamingly dark icons by Christina Ramberg, Ray Yoshida, Nadine Robinson, and Marten herself—are the works you want to run your fingers through. Through May 24. (Baumgold, 74 E. 79th St. 861-7338.)

Short List

TOM OTTERNESS
Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. 541-4900.
Through May 18.

MARTIN PURYEAR
McKee, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 688-5951.
Through June 21.

ED RUSCHA
C&M Arts, 45 E. 78th St. 861-0020.
Through June 8.

FRANCIS A. SILVA
Berry-Hill, 11 E. 70th St. 744-2300.
Through June 28.

GALLERIES—CHELSEA

POLLY APFELBAUM AND BEATRIZ MILHAZES
It's a pity that this inspired matchup includes only a single work by each artist. Apfelbaum's latest floor installation (she thinks of them as "fallen paintings"), a vast pool of swarming, jostling beadlike shapes cut out of velvet, is as intricately gorgeous as any before. Milhazes's canvas seems calmer, a sequence of expanding rosettes that grow from a single frail, naturalistic branch. Color is key for both artists, but their affinity goes further: both compose by shifting around prepainted elements. The results feel beguilingly light and provisional, like blossoms on the surface of a puddle. Through May 24. (D'Amelio Terras, 525 W. 22nd St. 352-9460.)

CARROLL DUNHAM
In wizardly black-and-white acrylic paintings on linen that look at first like vast ink drawings on acetate, Dunham reënergizes his frequent glyph of a rageful, top-hatted, eyeless, penis-nosed dude embedded in shattered forms of water, trees, and houses. How can such gross imagery pay off in joys of virtuosic elegance? Perhaps it's by communicating a narcissist's chief drives—need and resentment, the hunger for love, and the will to kill—so quickly and thoroughly that a first glance uses them up, leaving no mystery except the fact of creative alacrity. Dunham races through meaning so that execution can rule. This show's wealth of tonal and textural beauties (with subliminal effects created by minuscule glass beads and sand) more than beguiles. Through June 1. (Metro Pictures, 519 W. 24th St. 206-7100.)

Short List

A. BALASUBRAMANIAM
Talwar, 108 E. 16th St. 673-3096.
Through June 18.

BRICE MARDEN
Marks, 522 W. 22nd St. and 523 W. 24th St. 243-0200. Through June 21.

SUSAN ROTHENBERG
Sperone Westwater, 415 W. 13th St. 431-4685. Through June 1.

SUE WILLIAMS
303 Gallery, 525 W. 22nd St. 255-1121. Through May 18.

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

JACQUELINE GOUREVITCH
In the summer of 2000, the artist had a studio on the ninety-first floor of the World Trade Center, and the naturalistic watercolors and oils on linen that she made there offer prelapsarian vistas of skyscraper roofs, Diebenkorn-like renderings of the push and shove of buildings, and nighttime views of the Hudson. Some later paintings, based on memory, take up the viewpoint again, after the fall, with an almost heroic quietness. Through June 8. (DFN, 176 Franklin St. 334-3400.)

Short List

FRANCIS BACON
Shafrazi, 119 Wooster St. 274-9300. Through May 18.

PHOTOGRAPHY

TINA BARNEY
This time Barney offers an inside look at the English upper crust. The mixture of pride and cynicism in each picture is documented by Barney's exceptional use of color and large-format photography. You can move in close to these big prints just the way you might examine the brushwork of a Velázquez. Barney captures details—a half-unzipped fly or an unsightly appliance cable—that neatly skew the practiced equipoise of her subjects. Through June 14. (Borden, 560 Broadway. 431-0166.)

ELINOR CARUCCI
The young photographer offers more sensual work from her private life. There is nothing new to the subject or the settings (beds, bathrooms, and couches), but the simple compositions reveal complex relationships between flesh and blood. In one, Carucci and her husband sit quietly at the edge of a bed, echoing a photograph on a different bed of a topless Carucci beside her bare-chested father. Through June 15. (Ricco/Maresca, 529 W. 20th St. 627-4819.)

GREGORY CREWDSON
The twenty new prints from Crewdson's ongoing "Twilight" series reveal a darker, more sexual side of the story he tells best. The last time out, one critic gave his carefully staged tableaux a name that stuck: "The Art of the X-Files." Now his scenes look more like film noir, full of sex, isolation, and obsession. The change leaves the viewer less preoccupied with the herculean feats of lighting and special effects and more drawn into his paranormal drama. Still, the best piece here, "Untitled (Empty House)," showing a single lit house in a crowded middle-class neighborhood, is unusually restrained, more Hitchcock than David Lynch. Through June 15. (Luhring Augustine, 531 W. 24th St. 206-9100.)

LISA KERESZI
Although Kereszi photographs the banal—a few pieces of popcorn on a blue theatre floor, a cotton-candy-pink curtain next to an equally tacky painting—she avoids ironic angles and reveals a romantic sensitivity for the everyday. One image offers a deadpan look at the spot where two single mattresses meet to form a fake-out double bed; another shows a vacant rooftop parking lot. At first, it looks like another detached urban landscape. Then you notice a distant fireworks display bursting into the picture like Tinkerbell. Through May 27. (Pierogi, 177 N. 9th St., Williamsburg. 718-599-2144.)

DAVID LEVINTHAL
Levinthal, whose influential book "Hitler Moves East" first set toy soldiers in seemingly documentary scenarios, now directs dolls to explore another taboo: pornography. (These luminous Polaroids are already fetish objects to begin with—there are only five of the large-format cameras that produce them.) The dolls, meticulously (even lovingly) assembled from model kits, pose in candidly erotic if self-consciously lurid setups, making fairly naked points about desire and photography. Through June 15. (Morris, 465 W. 23rd St. 727-2752.)

RAY K. METZKER
No photographer captures city rhythms better. Using his own composite technique on a rediscovered batch of the shady street shots from the sixties, Metzker lines up rows of overlapping, double-exposed shots—of the hustling arrivals at a bus terminal or of the action at a hot-dog stand. He repeats the world-weary characters and layered reflections and shadows, but unexpectedly. With titles like "Hot Diggedy" and "Yikes," it's hard not to see him as a bebop photographer. Through June 15. (Laurence Miller, 20 W. 57th St. 397-3930.)

INTERNATIONAL CENTER OF PHOTOGRAPHY
1133 Sixth Ave., at 43rd St. 857-0000—**"Dream Street: W. Eugene Smith's Pittsburgh Photographs."** ♦ **"Rise of the Picture Press: Photographic Reportage in Illustrated Magazines, 1918-1939"** is plastered with magazine photographs, including work from Andres Kertesz, Henri Cartier-Bresson, and Margaret Bourke-White. The exhibition chronicles a heady time—the dawn of photojournalism—when magazines introduced innovations like montage (grafting Garbo's face onto the Sphinx), invented a "Separated at Birth"-like feature (placing a llama's face beside a portrait of Mr. Neville Chamberlain), and turned for the first time to bystanders to get records of major events, as in "Amateur Photographs of the Hindenberg's Last Landing." Both shows through June 16. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, 10-5; Fridays, 10-8; Saturdays and Sundays, 10-6.)

Short List

SHELBY LEE ADAMS
Milo, 552 W. 24th St. 414-0370. Through June 1.

PATRICK MC MULLAN
Corning, 667 Madison Ave., at 61st St. 752-1441. Through May 25.

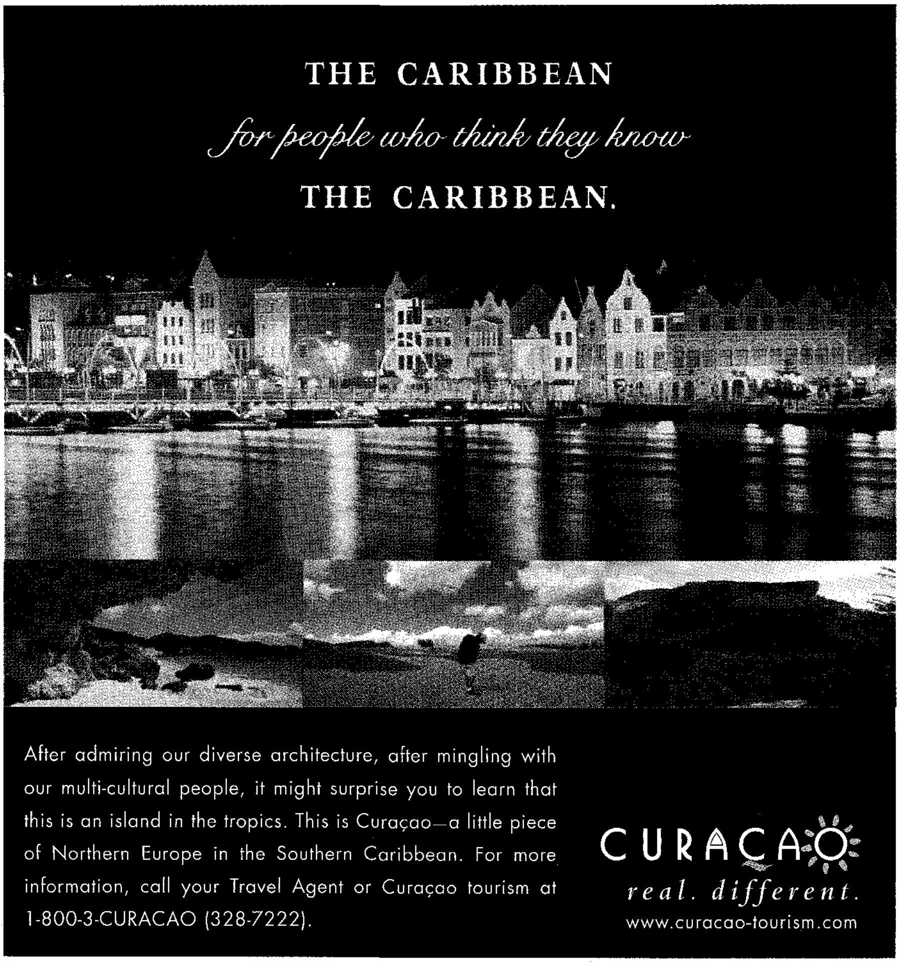
See the museum listings for a photography exhibition at the Jewish Museum.

AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES

SOTHEBY'S
May 15 at 7: The first session of a two-day sale of contemporary art. Paintings by Richter, Twombly, and Warhol ("Five Deaths," estimated to bring up to four million dollars) are among the highlights. ♦ May 16 at 10:15 A.M. and 2: The final two sessions of the sale, including paintings and photographs by Bourgeois, Tobey, Schnabel, and Neshat. ♦ May 17 at 10:15 A.M. and 2: Art works from Africa, Oceania, and the Americas. ♦ May 17 at 2 and May 18 at 10:15 A.M. and 2: "By Design," three sessions devoted to furniture and decorations. ♦ May 18 at 10 A.M. and 2: Fine wine. (York Ave. at 72nd St. 606-7000.)

CHRISTIE'S
May 15 at 10 A.M. and 2: The final sessions of a two-day sale of postwar and contemporary art, including works by Joan Mitchell and Eva Hesse. ♦ May 18 at 2: Christie's International Motor Cars brings its annual sale to Rockefeller Center for the first time. The offerings, fifty-one cars ranging from a 1931 Isotta Fraschini to a 2002 Chrysler Prowler, will be on view to the public on the plaza between 48th and 51st Sts., beginning May 16. (20 Rockefeller Plaza, at 49th St. 636-2000.)

PHILLIPS
May 21 at 2: "American Art," including works by Bierstadt, Cropsey, and Burchfield, along with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AND: A calendar of
New Yorker events
across the country

a selection of marine paintings by such artists as Salmon and Lane. (3 W. 57th St. 940-1200.)

DOYLE
May 15 at 10 A.M.: "Important English and Continental Furniture and Decorations," a sale that also includes a selection of Old Master paintings and drawings. ♦ May 21 at 1: European and American paintings, including works by Peto and Delacroix. (175 E. 87th St. 427-2730.)

SWANN
May 16 at 10:30 A.M.: "The Irene Fisher Collection of L. Frank Baum and Related Oziana." (104 E. 25th St. 254-4710.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC

OPERA

AMATO OPERA
Presenting **"Carmen,"** directed and conducted by Anthony Amato. (Amato Opera Theatre, 319 Bowery, at 2nd St. 228-8200. May 17-18 at 7:30.) ♦ The company holds a benefit gala concert and reception in memory of its co-founder, Sally Amato, including a screening of the recent documentary film "Amato: A Love Affair with Opera." (May 19 at 4.)

NEW YORK GILBERT & SULLIVAN PLAYERS
The Players return to their newly renovated home, Symphony Space, for a production of **"Patience"**; much joy and rapture is promised. Albert Bergeret conducts. (Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. May 16-17 at 8, May 18 at 3 and 8, and May 19 at 3.)

POCKET OPERA PLAYERS
John Eaton, a winner of a MacArthur Foundation "genius" grant, is a leading experimentalist of contemporary opera, composing complex works on grand subjects (Shakespeare's "The Tempest," Greek tragedy, the French Revolution) in a style that embraces tonality, serialism, and electronics. These all-Eaton concerts by Pocket Opera (with the New York New Music Ensemble) give New Yorkers a rare chance to sample some of his recent music—a miniature, all-instrumental treatment of Ibsen's "Peer Gynt" (with the clarinettist Jean Kopperud in the title role) and the première of ". . . Inasmuch," a whimsical piece for both opera and jazz singers. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. May 21-22 at 8.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC: "THANK YOU, KURT MASUR"
Masur's eleven years as music director have not been without their stormy moments, but the orchestra—and its audience—are undoubtedly in his debt. Under his guidance and discipline, the Philharmonic, the most temperamental of American orchestras, sounds better than ever: the raw and woolly sound of the Zubin Mehta years has been molded into something darkly expressive and refined. In the first of three final subscription programs, Masur reaches back to the legacies of two illustrious predecessors: Bernstein's "Serenade for Violin and Orchestra" (with Glenn Dicterow) and Mahler's Symphony No. 1. (May 16 at 8 and May 21 at 7:30.) (Avery Fisher Hall. 721-6500.)

CHORAL SYMPHONY SOCIETY
The orchestra and chorus, joined by the New York Cantata Singers, perform two Handel oratorios, "Alexander's Feast" and "The Choice of Hercules." David Labovitz conducts. (Christ and St. Stephen's Church, 120 W. 69th St. May 19 at 7. Tickets at the door.)

THE MET ORCHESTRA
Music by three great showmen fills the orchestra's final program of the season. Everyone knows Mozart's "Jupiter" Symphony, but fewer know Strauss's "Burleske," for piano and orchestra (with Jean-Yves Thibaudet), a brawny, knuckle-crunching comedy from his early years. Another major work, William Bolcom's "Seventh Symphony: A Symphonic Concerto," is enjoying its première; the composer, whose once riotous eclecticism has focussed into a coherent classical style, compares its structure to a Shakespeare play, with the musical themes functioning as characters that develop their roles throughout the work. James Levine conducts, wrapping things up with Ravel's "Boléro." (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. May 19 at 3.)

PHILADELPHIA ORCHESTRA
Wolfgang Sawallisch conducts the orchestra's final Carnegie Hall concert of the season, a Viennese program of Mozart (the poetic, introspective Piano Concerto No. 27, with Maurizio Pollini) and Franz Schmidt (the Symphony No. 2 in E-Flat Major). (247-7800. May 21 at 8.)

RECITALS

CONTINUUM
Joel Sachs and Cheryl Seltzer, the conductor and the pianist at the heart of this longtime new-music group, present a program saluting Japan's young musical mavericks, including new works by Karen Tanaka, Akira Nishimura ("Halos," for trumpet and piano), and Ushio Torikai (a world première), among others. (Japan Society, 333 E. 47th St. 752-3015. May 15 at 8.)

MUSIC AT MERKIN CONCERT HALL
May 15 at 8: The young string consort Concertante plays a program mixing edge-of-the-repertory works by Spohr (the Double Quartet) and Schulhoff with an old chestnut, Mendelssohn's radiant String Quintet No. 1 in A Major. ♦ May 19 at 3: Marilyn Horne and Robert White co-host a recital by the soprano Meagan Miller (a winner of the 1999 Metropolitan Opera National Council auditions), who performs a program of Debussy, Poulenc, Strauss, and Robert Beaser (the New York première of an Emily Dickinson cycle). ♦ May 21 at 8: Robert Taub, one of New York's special breed of intellectual keyboard virtuosos, completes his three-year survey of the Beethoven piano sonatas, performing No. 15 in D Major ("Pastorale"), No. 26 in E-Flat Major ("Les Adieux"), and No. 32 in C Minor. (129 W. 67th St. 501-3330.)

"STILL LIFE WITH MICROPHONE"
Todd Reynolds, more than any other New York violinist, has mastered the styles of jazz and classical with equal skill and flair. Also a composer, he's been working on "Still Life," a collaborative project employing theatre, movement, and improvised music, for several years; by now he's reached "Version 3.0," which will include contributions from the downtown band Gutbucket and the sound artists Phil Kline and DJ Jesse Stiles and a new piece from the composer Ingram Marshall. (Galapagos Art Space, 70 N. 6th St., Williamsburg, Brooklyn. 718-782-5188. May 16 at 8.)

KRONOS QUARTET
"Nuevo," the string quartet's new disk of Mexican music, belongs more to the realm of world music than to the classical genre; it's the suave arrangements, many by Osvaldo Golijov, of pieces like Esquivel's immortal lounge opus "Mini Skirt" (complete with wolf whistles) and Revueltas's "Sensemaya" (a monument of the nineteen-thirties avant-garde) that give it a sheen of art-music irony. It's delicious stuff in any case, and to spread the word the group will perform music from the album in concerts at Joe's Pub. (425 Lafayette St. 239-6200. May 16-17 at 7 and 9:30 and May 18 at 7.) ♦ **Note:** The Kronos also plays a benefit program for the pub of Reich's "Triple Quartet" and other selections from their recent albums, with the soprano Audra McDonald as special guest. (May 18 at 9:30.)

BARGEMUSIC
May 16-17 at 7:30: Randall Hodgkinson made headlines recently as a piano soloist in Seiji Ozawa's final concert with the Boston Symphony at Carnegie Hall, but usually he leads a quieter life as one of Beantown's premier chamber players. He comes to Brooklyn to join the violinist Carmit Zori and the cellist Hillel Zori for a program of Mozart and Schumann ("Carnaval" and the Piano Trio in G Minor). ♦ May 18 at 7:30 and May 19 at 4: A performance of Turina's Piano Trio (along with a group of his Andalusian songs, with the soprano Alexandra Montano) and Arensky's Piano Trio No. 1, a jewel of salon music from the Russia of Nicholas II. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-2083.)

COMMON GROUND: "BATTAGLIA!"
The period-instrument ensemble offers a concert of instrumental duets—and duels—from the seven-

teenth century, including music by Biber, Rossi, and Stradella. (Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Central Park W. at 65th St. May 17 at 8. Tickets at the door.)

MARIA EWING AND KEN NODA
Ewing, a fiercely expressive soprano whose vocal equipment seemed to falter through overuse during the nineties, is not heard very often anymore; her program of songs by Debussy, Turina, and Brahms, along with concert arias by Beethoven ("Ah! Perfido!") and Berlioz ("La Mort de Cléopâtre") may be something of a comeback. Noda, a pianist of exceptional poise, is her accompanist. (Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. May 17 at 8.)

"MUSIC IN CHELSEA" SERIES: CHRISTOPHER UNGERER
The pianist, scheduled to perform in the fall, suffered the loss of his Battery Park City home—and the piano inside it—on September 11th. Safe and sound, he presents a program of music by Brahms and Beethoven (the "Appassionata" sonata), along with pieces by two contemporary Neo-Romantics, Lee Hoiby and Lowell Liebermann ("Gargoyles"). (St. Peter's Church, 346 W. 20th St. May 19 at 4. Tickets at the door.)

MODERNWORKS!
This strangely wrought but stylish ensemble—four cellos, two violins, and viola, with electronic overlays—presents a program of works by Peter Knell, Gabriela Lena Frank ("Las Sombras de los Apus," an homage to the high peaks of the Andes Mountains), and others, including several premières. (Leonard Nimoy Thalia Theatre, Broadway at 95th St. 362-0962. May 20 at 8.)

SEQUITUR: "FOUR CONCERTOS"
In one of the new-music group's most ambitious programs, Elliott Carter's Double Concerto for Harpsichord, Piano, and Two Chamber Orchestras—a modernist classic—anchors a concert of premières by Harold Meltzer, Thea Musgrave ("Lamenting with Ariadne," a work with solo viola), and David Rakowski. (Alice Tully Hall. 721-6500. May 21 at 8.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

RED HOOK WATERFRONT ARTS FESTIVAL
The up-and-coming Brooklyn neighborhood with views of the Statue of Liberty and New York Harbor celebrates its artsy side on May 18, starting at 11 A.M. The third annual Earth and Surf Parade gathers more than two hundred costumed revellers for a whimsical march from Coffey Park to the Beard St. Pier. At 1, Martha Bowers and her company Dance Theatre Etcetera join the jazz musician Philip Hamilton and other performers for a show on the pier. Other highlights of the afternoon include an open house at the Waterfront Museum and Showboat Barge and the Brooklyn Working Artists Coalition's annual pier show. For more information, call 718-287-2224.

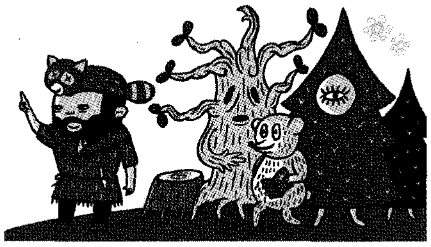
READINGS
May 15 at 6:30: The actors Joan Allen, Freda Foh Shen, and Joanna Gleason read short stories by Elizabeth Cox, lê thi diem thúy, and Sylvia Brownrigg. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400.) ♦ May 20 at 8: Jonathan Franzen offers passages from his novel "The Corrections." (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 399-3030.) ♦ May 21 at 7: Lucille Clifton, Stanley Kunitz, and Sharon Olds read from their contributions to Poetry in Motion, the program that puts verse on subways and buses. (Barnes & Noble, 33 E. 17th St. No tickets necessary.)

TALKS
May 16 at 6: The octogenarian producer Philip Rose discusses his memoir, "You Can't Do That on Broadway!: 'A Raisin in the Sun' and Other Theatrical Improbabilities." (New York Public Library, Mid-Manhattan Branch, Fifth Ave. at 40th St. No tickets necessary.) ♦ May 20 at 7: The photographer Joseph Blackburn shows slides of the 1988 ascent without supplemental oxygen of Mt. Everest that he documented, along with slides from his trips with the climber Robert Anderson as he made solo ascents of the so-called Seven Summits, which consist of the highest peak on each continent. (Explorers Club, 46 E. 70th St. Tickets at the door.)

BOOK CURRENTS

Solitary Men

If you spent the last weekend in April at the Merlefest bluegrass festival in Wilkesboro, North Carolina, you may have run across a tall, handsome tepee dweller in buckskins. That was Eustace Conway, an idealistic Luddite who "heritage farms" his thousand-acre tract of Appalachian land using Mennonite machinery and knows how to start a fire by rubbing two sticks together. Conway is an eater of roadkill and a tireless promoter of life in the woods, and he is also the anachronism around whom the novelist and journalist Elizabeth Gilbert builds her new book, THE LAST AMERICAN MAN (Viking). Conway, who rode his horse from Georgia to California in a hundred and three days and has studied most of the languages of the North Carolina Indian tribes, compares himself to a Stone Age man caught out alone in modern society. But, loosened up with a little whiskey, he resorts to modern slang ("That's why they pay me the big Benjamins!" he says in response to a compliment from Gilbert), proving that he is as much showman as frontiersman.



AYA KAKEDA

Prehistoric diversions are about the only kind on the Shiants, Adam Nicolson's private islands in the Hebrides, off the coast of Scotland. "Shiant" means "holy" or "haunted" in Gaelic, and in SEA ROOM (North Point), Nicolson tells of discovering an Iron Age house, an early Christian hermit's stone pillow, and traces of his Viking ancestors, who are believed to have first landed there in the ninth century. Since that first settlement, the islands have changed hands many times, but they came back into Nicolson's family when his father bought them for £1,400 in 1937. The book is Nicolson's farewell to the Shiants, which he plans to give to his son when he turns twenty-one.

—*Dana Goodyear*

SWANN AUCTIONS

Andre Kertesz,
Chez Mondrian,
silver print, 1926,
printed 1970s.
At auction June 6.

Thur June 6
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2:30pm
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Inquiries: Daile Kaplan
Illustrated Catalogue: $35

Thur June 13
10:30am &
2pm
Art Books & Livres d'Artiste
Inquiries: Christine von der Linn
Illustrated Catalogue: $15

Thur June 20
10:30am
Maps & Atlases, Natural History & Historical Prints
Inquiries: Gary Garland
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MOVIES OPENING

ABOUT A BOY

Chris and Paul Weitz ("American Pie") adapt Nick Hornby's comedic novel about a self-absorbed bachelor who trolls for women at single-parent support groups. With Hugh Grant, Toni Collette, and Rachel Weisz. Opening May 17.

THE BELIEVER

Ryan Gosling plays Danny Balint, a young Jewish man who has become a neo-Nazi, in a drama written and directed by Henry Bean. Opening May 17. (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

CREMASTER 3

The final installment of Matthew Barney's five-part Cremaster cycle centers on two New York landmarks, the Chrysler Building and the Guggenheim Museum. Opening May 15. (Film Forum.)

LATE MARRIAGE

A comedy of manners set in the émigré community of Tel Aviv, in which an eligible Georgian man rejects "suitable" girls in favor of a Moroccan divorcée. Written and directed by Dover Koshashvili. In Georgian and Hebrew. Opening May 17. (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

STANDING BY YOURSELF

Josh Koury directed this documentary about the alienated, self-destructive life of his teen-age brother, Adam, who, along with his best friend, rages against their upstate New York town. Opening May 15. (Pioneer.)

STAR WARS:
EPISODE II—ATTACK OF THE CLONES

Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. Opening May 16.

FILM NOTES

THE BAKER'S WIFE

The village baker (Raimu) cannot work because he laments his wife's departure with a stupid, sexy shepherd; the villagers, who want their bread, organize to bring her back. Raimu's baker is an acting classic—a true tragicomic hero—and it's easy to agree with Orson Welles, who cited this 1938 comedy as proof that "a story and an actor, both superb," can result in "a perfect movie" even if the direction and the editing are not "cinematic." Marcel Pagnol, a playwright who turned scenarist and then writer-director, adapted this classic of cuckoldry from Jean Giono's "Jean le Bleu." With Ginette Leclerc (who can pout with her mouth open) as the wife. In French.—*Pauline Kael* (Symphony Space; May 18-19.)

BARAN

Latif (Hossein Abedini), a wily Iranian teen-ager, falls in love with an Afghan refugee girl, Baran (Zahra Bahrami), who works at the same construction site as he does in Tehran. He hardly approaches her, though; he treats Baran as a kind of sacred mystery he must protect. This quietly rhapsodic movie is made in a spirit of the deepest respect. It doesn't knock you out, but it's often touching. Written and directed by the Iranian filmmaker Majid Majidi. In Farsi.—*David Denby* (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Village East Cinemas.)

CHANGING LANES

A young corporate lawyer (Ben Affleck) and a troubled father who works as an insurance salesman (Samuel L. Jackson) get into a minor collision on the F.D.R. Drive, and instead of just letting the damn thing go, they spend the rest of the day tormenting each other. The plot, with its matched, escalating acts of revenge, may be a contrivance, but the movie plays earnestly and well. The real subject is not revenge, but the malevolence inherent in a competitive society that occasionally breaks through the surface, leaving anyone who takes part feeling ridiculous and bewildered. The camera is too active, and the editing strategies too unsettled, but much of the writing (by Chap Taylor and Michael Tolkin) is either affecting or gratifyingly nasty. The final surprise: Ben Affleck grows up and gives the first good performance of his life.—*D.D.* (Reviewed in our issue of 5/6/02.) (42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, New York Twin, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Theatre, and Village Theatre VII.)

DOGTOWN AND Z-BOYS

An exuberant documentary account of the rebirth of skateboarding in the early seventies. It seems that a fortuitous combination of newly invented polyurethane wheels and a drought in Southern California—all those drained swimming pools with their curved bottoms and vertical sides—led a bunch of surfer rats in Santa Monica to adapt their crouching, wave-touching moves to the skateboard. As a culture, skateboarding took off from there, and almost thirty years later, the little group of punky pioneers is still proud of what they did. Skate legend Stacy Peralta directed, and the documentary has lots of home movies, stills, and current interviews with the grownup Z-boys, including such former teen masters as Jay Adams and Tony Alva. The movie is too long for what it has to say, but it has a likably rough surface and an appreciation of odd talents and quirks.—*D.D.* (Angelika Film Center, Empire 25, and 19th Street East 6.)

ENIGMA

The title refers to the infamous encryption machine employed by the Germans in the Second World War, although viewers may be excused for noting a deeper mystery: how could anyone make such a prosaic film out of such promising material? We get a young Cambridge mathematician (Dougray Scott), who is called to Bletchley Park—the secret center of British brainwork in the fight against Enigma—to crack a new code named Shark. There, hindered by one clerk (Saffron Burrows) and helped by another (Kate Winslet), he is dragged into a saga of spying, treachery, and terrible wartime food. The task of deciphering, though laid out with a care verging on the simplistic, manages nevertheless to remain unintelligible, as does the means by which the action suddenly switches to Scotland. With Jeremy Northam as a smooth spook and, for one delirious moment, Mick Jagger.—*Anthony Lane* (4/22 & 29/02) (Angelika Film Center, Cinema 2, East 86th Street Cinemas, Empire 25, Lincoln Square, and 19th Street East 6.)

HOLLYWOOD ENDING

Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. (BAM Rose Cinemas, Beekman, East 86th Street Cinemas, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, 34th Street Theatre, and Village Theatre VII.)

HOME MOVIE

The documentarian Chris Smith is a connoisseur of the gnarly fringe of humanity—unreconstructed eccentrics who live by their own internal rules and systems. "Home Movie" is not a sustained leer like Smith's previous work, "American Movie," but a light, hour-long look at five people who live in unusual houses. We don't spend enough time with the subjects to really get to know them (a Florida houseboat dweller and an old lady who has retreated to a jungle tree house are the most vivid), but the queasy voyeurism that seems to be Smith's forte settles in immediately. His movie is paired with "Heavy Metal Parking Lot," a fifteen-minute video shot in 1986 by two amateur cameramen. Their simple, glorious achievement was to record fans of Judas Priest getting loaded before a concert. These metalheads live for loud guitars, lots of beers, and their Camaros, and there's no reason not to love them for it.—*Michael Agger* (Union Square.)

KISSING JESSICA STEIN

The title character is a nice Jewish girl from Scarsdale who is not gay, but wants to know how to be. After a series of dates with feckless men, she answers a personal ad placed by a woman seeking a woman. So far, so straight. The twist is that the woman who wrote the ad is, like Jessica, débuting as a lesbian, and together the two begin a jittery emotional experiment. Heather Juergensen and Jennifer Westfeldt play the leads, and they also wrote the script, which is very chatty and fast. Their courtship scenes convince where it matters most: showing how the skittish and prim Stein might loosen up and respond to another woman, a self-imposed dare that becomes a reality.—*M.A.* (Chelsea Cinemas, Empire 25, First & 62nd Cinemas, and Sunshine Cinema.)

THE LADY AND THE DUKE

The latest project from the unstoppable Eric Rohmer (who, at the age of eighty-two, seems as resourceful as ever) is set during the bloodier travails of the French Revolution. A resident Englishwoman (Lucy Russell) finds that her safety in Paris is threatened, first by her ill-advised monarchism, and then by her continuing devotion to the Duke of Orleans (Jean-Claude Dreyfus), whose own Republican credentials start to crumble. As so often, Rohmer seems to be challenging himself to make as talkative a film as possible without actually sabotaging the dramatic tension; on top of that, he has shot his costumed characters on digital video, against painted cityscapes that could hardly be mistaken for the real thing. Fortunately, the plight of his heroine is just about fraught enough to survive these contrivances, and it is fun to imagine French audiences, schooled in the glories of the period, watching the parade of squabbles, whispers, and petty suspicions that is staged by a skeptical director. In French.—*A.L.* (5/13/02) (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Quad Cinema.)

LAGAAN

This Indian film—a period musical drama about a group of drought-stricken villagers who play a cricket match against the British authorities to avoid taxation (*lagaan*)—is pure Bollywood. The director Ashutosh Gowariker crosses a lavish romantic epic with a muscular adventure tale and comes up with an outrageously buoyant hybrid. The musical sequences burst from the story organically, and the outdoor production numbers are composed of brilliantly edited tracking shots and spectacular choreography. Not all the performances soar (the British actors seem particularly stiff), but the romantic leads are wonderful. Aamir Khan's masterly preening is worthy of a young Tony Curtis and his ladylove, played by Gracy Singh, does a Janet Leigh turn at getting her man. The daunting four-hour length leaves plenty of room for meandering subplots and misunderstandings, but the film is so visually alive and superbly structured—it also breaks for an intermission—that you will be happily taken in by its bighearted charms. In Hindi and English.—*Bruce Diones* (Film Forum.)

THE MAN WITH THE MOVIE CAMERA

Dziga Vertov celebrates the dynamic variety of urban life in his 1929 silent masterpiece, the apex of the symphony-of-the-street movie. Setting a prototype cameraman loose to chronicle an unnamed Soviet metropolis from dawn to dusk, he records the commotion on the boulevard and in the trolley yard, the kinetics of newfangled exercise machines that would fit right into today's infomercials, and the chagrin at a bureau that handles both divorce and marriage. A protean stylist, Vertov deploys every device from split and superimposed images to pixilation and freeze-frames; his film has wit as well as gusto, a clear-headed lyricism, and a robust, sometimes vaudevillian humor. (Was he the first to cut from a supine woman to a hurtling train?)—*Michael Sragow* (Museum of Modern Art; May 16 and May 19.)

MONSOON WEDDING
Mira Nair's latest picture has been hailed as a feel-good spree, but it's better than that—a barely stable compound of the wounding, the confusing, and the appealing. The action takes place in Delhi, where a pair of middle-class parents (Lillete Dubey and Naseeruddin Shah) work themselves into a froth over the nuptials of their daughter (Vasundhara Das). Her marriage is, of course, arranged; for all the racket and buzz of the film's modernity, it finds time to make the suggestion—bewildering, perhaps, to audiences here—that from this archaic arrangement can spring an enduring love. The groom is flying in from Houston, Texas; another relative travels from Australia, and you brace yourself for the cultural collisions. The result is a comedy, but only just. India's stressful poise between orthodoxy and innovation (listen for the clash of peacock and cell phone) leads to a devastating family fracture that is only half-healed by the celebrations at the end. In English and Hindi.—*A.L.* (2/18 & 25/02) (Paris, Sunshine Cinema, and 34th Street Theatre.)

MURDER BY NUMBERS
Cheesy, but absorbing. Two would-be high-school supermen—the morosely bookish Justin (Michael Pitt), who carries a volume of Rimbaud around with him, and his friend Richard (Ryan Gosling), a cocky rich kid with superior powers of seduction and intimidation—randomly select a woman in their California town and murder her. Their nemesis: a neurotically driven homicide detective (Sandra Bullock) who lives with an unhappy past. Bullock enters the crime scene holding a doughnut box and speaks quietly, her attention fixed on the dead body and the terrain. Is she believable as a crime specialist? Well, she's believable as a comedy star attempting to give a serious performance as a crime specialist. The director, Barbet Schroeder, and the screenwriter, Tony Gayton, do their best to bring out the perverse psychological connection between Bullock's character and the contemptible but attractive kid played by Gosling.—*D.D.* (5/6/02) (Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Theatre, and Union Square.)

NINE QUEENS
The great Argentinean actor Ricardo Darín plays an experienced grifter who takes a young hopeful (Gastón Pauls) into his confidence game. The seductive and manipulative camerawork and the sly-as-a-fox performance by Darín combine to make a slippery caper movie. There are elements of Mamet and Hitchcock throughout, but the director, Fabián Bielinsky, uses these influences amusingly and crafts an unpredictable entertainment. In Spanish.—*B.D.* (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Sunshine Cinema.)

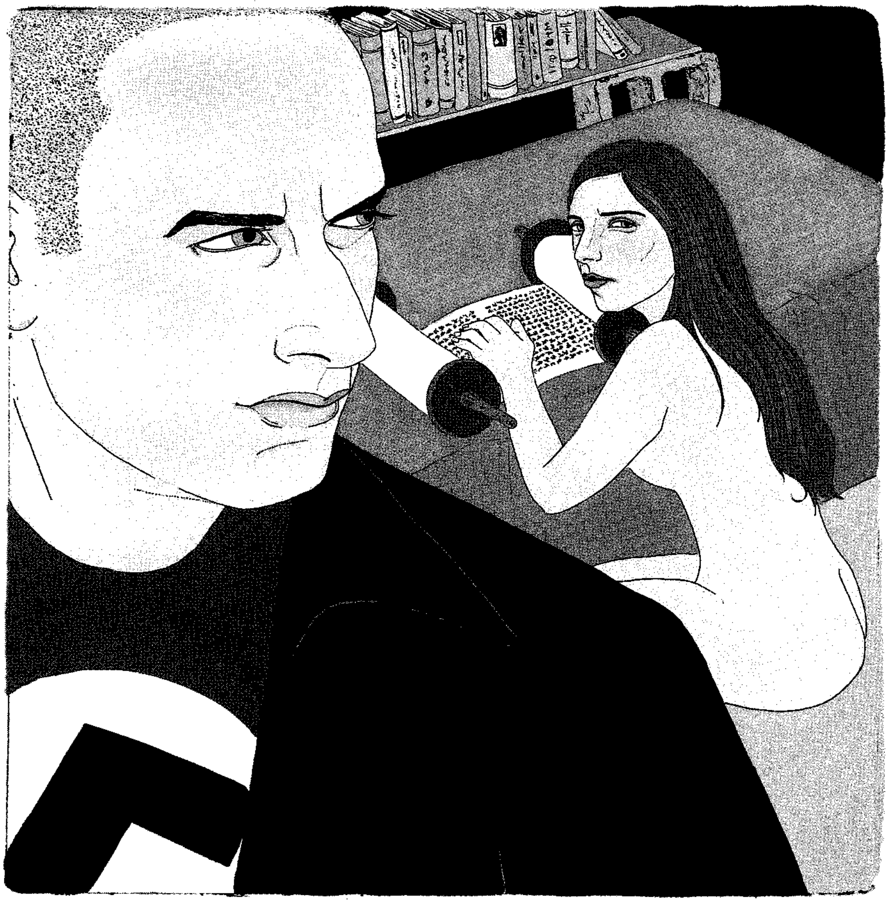
PANIC ROOM
The title of the new David Fincher film refers to a secure stronghold that is built into the walls of a New York house. Think of it as a safe, in which you lock your loved ones as well as your money. It is in one such room that a divorced mother (Jodie Foster) and her daughter (Kristen Stewart) take refuge when three burglars (Forest Whitaker, Dwight Yoakam, and Jared Leto) break in at night. From here on it's a game of cat and mouse, with the cat swinging a sledgehammer and the mice trying to reach their cell phone. The result is not so much scary as endlessly worrying; the movie was designed, propitiously, to suck in all the insecurities that you can imagine, and a few that you can't. What lends the ordeal its bite is the playoff between Whitaker, with his sluggish menace, and the tight-lipped, fretting Foster.—*A.L.* (4/8/02) (Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 64th and 2nd, 34th Street Theatre, and Village Theatre VII.)

THE PIANO TEACHER
Michael Haneke's calmly lucid masterpiece is about a seemingly unmanageable subject: a sadomasochistic piano teacher, Professor Erika Kohut (Isabelle Huppert), who maintains a sternly proper façade at the Vienna Conservatory while tormenting and playing dirty tricks on her talented students. Erika lives in an apartment with her hysterically possessive mother (Annie Girardot)—the two take turns slapping each other—and she tries to control the insolently charming and handsome young piano student (Benoît Magimel) who wants to be her lover. She may be a certifiable nut straight out of clinical literature, but she's also a remarkable dramatic creation—an appalling but plausible human being brought to life by one of the world's bravest actresses. Huppert, whose masklike face seethes with rage, gives a classic account of repression and sexual hypocrisy. This is a genuinely shocking movie (one scene of self-mutilation is hard to take), but it's supremely intelligent, too, and there isn't a trace of sensationalism. In French.—*D.D.* (4/1/02) (Cinema Village and Sutton 1 and 2.)

THE SALTON SEA
A noirish, down-and-out Los Angeles apartment; tattooed meth-heads freaking at endless parties; a lonely trumpet player sitting in a building on fire—the young director D. J. Caruso is a romantic rhapsodist of squalor and disaster. His material is morose, self-pitying, and pretentious, but the picture is absorbing nonetheless and generally well acted. Val Kilmer gives a grimly witty performance as the seemingly defeated hero, a man who has suffered loss and is seeking revenge. Vincent D'Onofrio goes over the top as a sadistic drug dealer who has snorted away his nose (he's got a plastic one), and virtually every hip actor remaining in Hollywood can be found burrowing in one dark corner or another.—*D.D.* (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Square.)

SPIDER-MAN
The perils and advantages of being bitten by a genetically modified spider are made abundantly clear in Sam Raimi's enjoyable, if broken-backed, exercise in high-cost pulp. Tobey Maguire plays Peter Parker, who develops a useful ability to hurl threads of web from his wrists and thus becomes, to his delight, the highest swinger in town. This prowess earns him the adoration of Mary Jane (Kirsten Dunst) and the enmity of the Green Goblin (Willem Dafoe), whose infinite capacity for evil is slightly undercut by the fact that he began life as a man called Norman. The movie is all over the place, unable to decide, for instance, whether New York should be shot as a livable city or as a Gothamite gulf of crime; similarly, Dafoe delivers a cartoon while Maguire offers a funny, rueful study in uncertain heroics. The picture is more violent than it has any right to be: why bother to throw grenades at Spider-Man, when you can presumably chase him away with a stiff broom?—*A.L.* (5/13/02) (Astor Plaza, Chelsea Cinemas, Chelsea West, Empire 25, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Metro Twin, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, 34th Street Theatre, and Union Square.)

UNFAITHFUL
Connie (Diane Lane), a suburban New York housewife and mother with too much time on her hands, gets picked up in SoHo by a sexy young Frenchman (Olivier Martinez) and falls into a passionate afternoons-only affair; her husband, Edward (Richard Gere), senses from the beginning that something is amiss. The director Adrian Lyne has been making erotic dramas for years ("9 1/2 Weeks," "Fatal Attraction," "Indecent Proposal"), and this is his most earnest and nonexploitative effort to date. The movie is very scrupulous about the feelings of Connie and Edward and the damage adultery can do to a family. If only the characters were more interesting. The three principals have no dimensions beyond what's functionally required by the situation, and we can't quite tell if the husband and wife are silent because their marriage is a zero or because the screenwriters forgot to give them something to say. Lane goes through the stages of denial, resistance, joy, and guilt with virtuoso ability; Gere, looking a little older these days, is quiet and saddened—it's amusing to see him wearing the horns for a change. The movie is based on Claude Chabrol's 1969 thriller "La Femme Infidèle" but it lacks the cool perversity of the original; it's a highly responsible sex movie. Written by Alvin Sargent and William Broyles, Jr.—*D.D.* (Chelsea Cinemas, East 85th Street, Empire 25, First & 62nd Cinemas, Murray Hill Cinemas, 62nd & Broadway, and Village East Cinemas.)



Ryan Gosling plays a Jewish neo-Nazi in "The Believer," opening May 17.

LARA TOMLIN

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Y TU MAMÁ TAMBIÉN
The latest movie from the Mexican director Alfonso Cuarón, who came to Hollywood to make "A Little Princess" and "Great Expectations" and who has now returned in triumph to his homeland. The story is a stripped-down road movie: two teenage friends, one rich (Diego Luna) and one poor (Gael García Bernal), borrow a car and set off to find the perfect beach, in the company of a Spanish woman (Maribel Verdú) who is not merely older, but married. Plus, she seems inexplicably happy to take either, or both, of them to bed. All the boys' dreams, in other words, have come true, and they can hardly handle it. What ensues is a sad and sexy picaresque, as everyone's illusions are peeled off along with their clothes. Cuarón's style is so open and relaxed, and his actors are so attuned to one another, that not until the final scene, with its litany of revelations, do we see that what felt life-affirming has also been a meditation on the slide of time, and on the off-stage presence of death. Unrated, and therefore full of proper sex, with all the improprieties intact. In Spanish.—*A.L.* (3/18/02) (BAM Rose Cinemas, East 86th Street Cinemas, Empire 25, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, and Sunshine Cinema.)

ALSO PLAYING

ABC AFRICA
Cinema Village.
THE CAT'S MEOW
84th Street Sixplex, 64th and 2nd, and Village East Cinemas.
THE LAST WALTZ
Union Square.
MURDEROUS MAIDS
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Quad Cinema.
THE MYSTIC MASSEUR
Angelika Film Center and Cinema 1.
RAIN
Angelika Film Center, BAM Rose Cinemas, and Eastside Playhouse.

THEATRE ADDRESSES

Unless noted, call 777-FILM for show times.

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St.
Astor Plaza, 44th St. at Broadway.
BAM Rose Cinemas, 30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn.
Battery Park 16, West St. at Vesey St.
Beekman, Second Ave. at 66th St.
Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd St.
Chelsea West, 333 W. 23rd St.
Cinemas 1, 2, and 3, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St. (924-3363).
East 86th Street Cinemas, Third Ave. at 86th St.
84th Street Sixplex, Broadway at 84th St.
Empire 25, on 42nd St. near Eighth Ave. (398-3939).
59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th St.
Film Forum, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110).
First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd St.
42nd Street E Walk, 42nd St. near Eighth Ave.
Kips Bay Theatre, Second Ave. at 32nd St.
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, Broadway at 63rd St.
Lincoln Square, Broadway at 68th St.
Metro Twin, Broadway at 99th St.
Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th St.
New York Twin, Second Ave. at 67th St.
19th Street East 6, Broadway at 19th St.
Olympia I and II, Broadway at 107th St.
Orpheum VII, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Paris, 4 W. 58th St. (688-3800).
Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th St.
Pioneer, 155 E. 3rd St. (254-3300).
Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th St.
The Screening Room, 54 Varick St. (334-2100).
72nd Street East, Third Ave. at 71st St.
64th and 2nd, Second Ave. at 64th St.
62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd St.
Sunshine Cinema, 139-143 E. Houston St.
Sutton 1 and 2, Third Ave. at 57th St.
34th Street Theatre, 312 W. 34th St.
Union Square, Broadway at 13th St.
Village East Cinemas, Second Ave. at 12th St.
Village Theatre VII, Third Ave. at 11th St.
Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th St.

REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

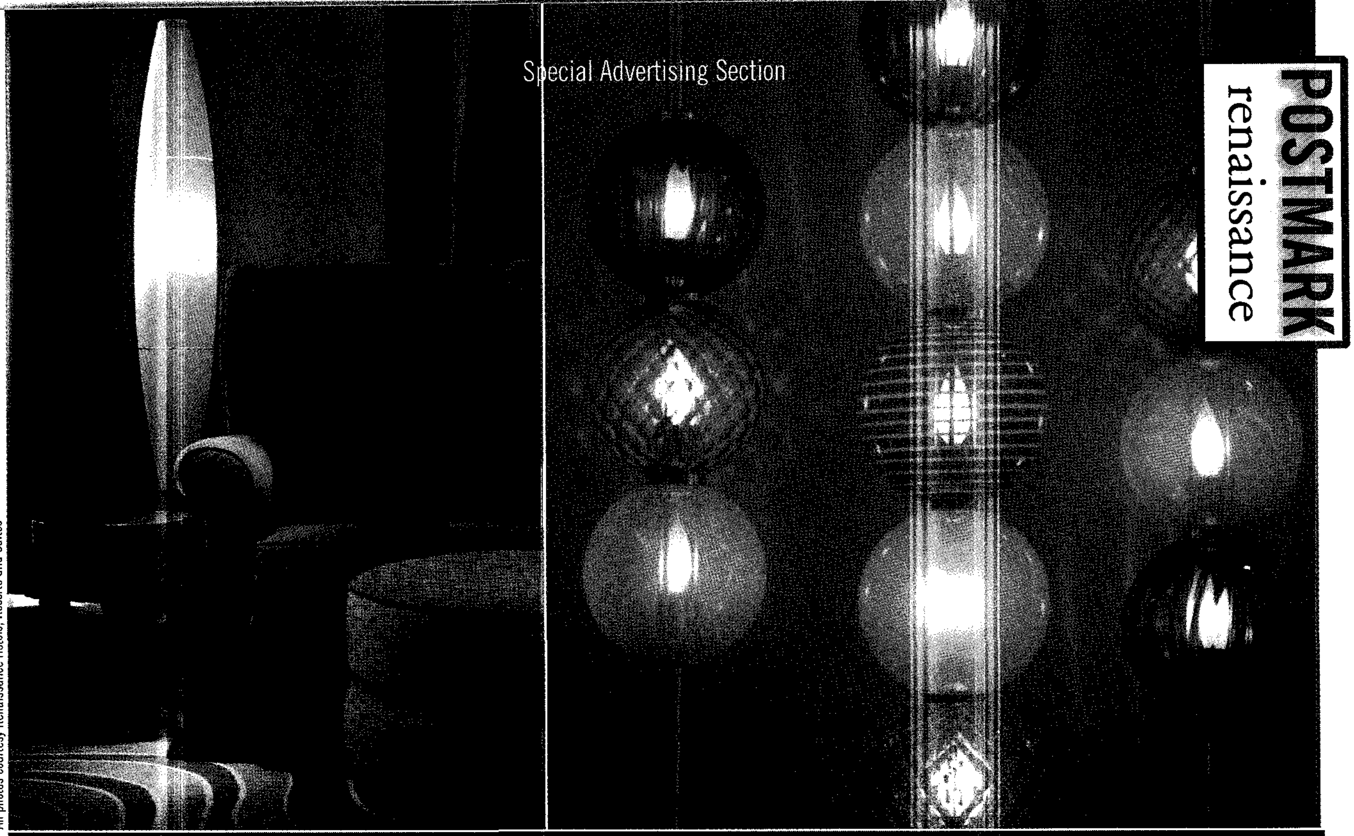
Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE
35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—"Rescued Treasures," restored films. May 18 at 2: "The Emperor Jones" (1933, Dudley Murphy). ♦ May 18 at 4: "Children of Divorce" (1927, Frank Lloyd). ♦ May 19 at 2: "The Shakedown" (1929, William Wyler). ♦ May 19 at 4: "Pandora's Box" (1928, G. W. Pabst). ♦ Repertory nights. May 18-19 at 6:30: "Mamma Roma" (1962, Pier Paolo Pasolini; in Italian).
ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES
32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (505-5110)—Through May 19: The Bicycle Film Festival. May 17 at 7 and May 19 at 7:30: "A Sunday in Hell" (1973, Jorgen Leth; in Danish). ♦ May 17 at 9:45 and May 18 at 6:45: "Beijing Bicycle" (2001, Xiaoshuai Wang; in Mandarin). ♦ May 17 at midnight: "Nebraska Supersonic" (1999, Jeremy Lerman). ♦ May 18 at 4:30: "Dorkin 10" (2000, Mark Eaton) and "Nasty's World" (2002, Steve Olpin). ♦ May 18 at 9:15: "2 Seconds" (1998, Manon Briand; in French).
BAM ROSE CINEMAS
30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-777-3456)—May 15 at 6:50 and 9:10: "Bitter Rice" (1948, Giuseppe De Santis; in Italian). ♦ May 16 at 6:30 and 9:20: "The Great War" (1959, Mario Monicelli; in Italian). ♦ May 17 at 2, 4:30, 6:50, and 9:10: "Manhunter" (1986, Michael Mann). ♦ May 18 at 2, 5, and 9: "Evil Dead 2" (1987, Sam Raimi) and "Army of Darkness" (1993, Raimi). ♦ May 19 at 2, 4:30, 6:50, and 9:10: "The Bandit" (1946, Alberto Lattuada; in Italian). ♦ May 20 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:10: "Viy" (1967, Konstantin Yershov and Giorgi Kropachyov; in Russian). ♦ May 21 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:10: "Criss Cross" (1946, Robert Siodmak).
FILM FORUM
W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110)—Through June 6: "The Great American Comedy." May 15 at 1, 4:55, and 8:50 and May 16 at 3: "Ball of Fire" (1941, Howard Hawks). ♦ May 15 at 3:05 and 7 and May 16 at 1:10 and 5:05: "The Lady Eve" (1941, Preston Sturges). ♦ May 17-18 at 1, 5:30, and 9:50: "The Seven Year Itch" (1955, Billy Wilder). ♦ May 17-18 at 3 and 7:30: "The Fortune Cookie" (1966, Wilder). ♦ May 19 at 1: "You'd Be Surprised" (1926, Arthur Rosson). ♦ May 19 at 3:40 and 7:50 and May 20 at 1 and 5:10: "The Graduate" (1967, Mike Nichols). ♦ May 19 at 5:40 and 9:50 and May 20 at 3: "M*A*S*H" (1970, Robert Altman). ♦ May 20 at 7:10 and 8:50: "The Freshman" (1925, Fred Newmeyer and Sam Taylor). ♦ May 21 at 1:45, 5:30, and 9:15: "The Court Jester" (1956, Melvin Frank and Norman Panama). ♦ May 21 at 3:40 and 7:25: "Monsieur Beaucaire" (1946, George Marshall).
FLORENCE GOULD HALL
55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—Through May 21: The films of Jacques Rivette. May 17 at 6:30: "La Belle Noiseuse" (1991; in French). ♦ May 21 at 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, and 9: "The Nun" (1966; in French).
MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—Through May 20: "Montage: Four Soviet Films." May 16 and May 19 at 3: "The Man with the Movie Camera" (†). ♦ May 17 at 3 and May 19 at 5: "Arsenal" (1929, Alexander Dovzhenko). ♦ May 18 and May 20 at 3: "Mother" (1926, Vsevolod I. Pudokvin). ♦ May 18 at 5:15: "Potemkin" (1929, Sergei Eisenstein). ♦ Through May 21: "Make Way for Tomorrow," a selection of films to mark the museum's temporary move to Queens. May 19 at 1: "My Darling Clementine" (1946, John Ford). ♦ May 20 at 6: Georges Méliès films. ♦ May 21 at 3: "Decasia" (2002, Bill Morrison). ♦ May 21 at 6: "Casablanca" (1942, Michael Curtiz). ♦ Classic cartoons presented in CinemaScope. May 17 at 6 and May 18 at 1.
SYMPHONY SPACE
2537 Broadway at 95th St. (864-5400)—Classic French cinema. The 2 P.M. screenings are double features. May 18 at 2, 6:30, and 9 and May 19 at 2: "The Baker's Wife" (†). ♦ May 18 at 4:15 and May 19 at 4:15, 6:30, and 8:30: "L'Atalante" (1934, Jean Vigo).

Lior Ashkenazi in "Late Marriage," a comedy about an overgrown mama's boy.

MATT MADDEN

WALTER READE THEATRE
Lincoln Center (875-5600)—Through May 21: "Landscapes of the Soul: The Cinema of Alexander Dovzhenko." All films are in Russian. May 15 at 1 and May 17 at 3:15 and 8:15: "Shchors" (1929). ♦ May 15 at 3:45 and May 17 at 1 and 6: "Michurin" (1948). ♦ May 16 at 1, 4:45, and 8:30: "Aerograd" (1935). ♦ May 16 at 2:45 and 6:30: "Ivan" (1932). ♦ May 18 at 5:30, May 19 at 4:30 and 8, and May 20 at 1: "Battle for Soviet Ukraine" (1943). ♦ May 18 at 7:15 and May 20 at 2:45: "Chronicle of the Years of Fire" (1960, Yulia Solntseva). ♦ May 18 at 9:30, May 19 at 1, and May 21 at 2:45: "Farewell, America" (1949). ♦ May 19 at 2:45 and 6:15 and May 21 at 1: "Victory on the Right Bank Ukraine" (1944).



At the Renaissance Pere Marquette in New Orleans it's the details that count.

All photos courtesy Renaissance Hotels, Resorts and Suites

KEYS TO THE CITY

NAO HAUSER

My discovery of a city starts with its hotel. It gives me a sense not just of belonging but also of possession—the street scenes and nightlife outside the front door are mine as much as the room.

At the sleek new **Renaissance Hollywood Hotel**, I can go to sleep with my own dreams of glamour and wake up, literally, to Hollywood—spelled out in the famous hills on view through my window. But these beacons aren't the only thing telling me where I am. My room, with its wood-slat blinds, kidney-shaped desk, and Eames repro chair, makes me think the cameras are rolling. I'm particularly into the Fifties-cinema, Life Savers colors. And yes, dahling, I am in the very same complex with the new Kodak Theatre, home to the Academy Awards, and Wolfgang Puck's latest restaurant, Vert.

Steps away are the Walk of Fame and Grauman's Chinese Theatre. I can put on my blue-tinted Oliver Peoples and stroll over to Musso & Frank's venerable grill, to see what stars might be waiting to shine. Or I can hang at the hotel pool, dine right there at Twist, and then check out the club scene on Cahuenga Boulevard, where no doubt more celebrities await. Anything is possible—this is Tinseltown!

Of course, nothing about the Renaissance Hollywood would be credible if the hotel took itself too seriously. As general manager Ken Schwartz puts it, "We can't be obvious. We have to be whimsical." This means that while he is totally agog with the Oscar night parties held there, Schwartz doesn't hang any glossy head shots, but only the hotel's original art, of which he is justifiably proud. And even though the place sports a glam-o-rama sushi bar, what Schwartz treats guests to is a pint of Ben & Jerry's. Hollywood is also where I should be cruising in a T-bird convertible with the wind in my hair, but Schwartz—a New York transplant—sensibly directs me to the hotel's own subway stop, only minutes from downtown L.A.

In Washington, D.C., by contrast, the heartbeat of the city is politics, so I know I am at the center of things when I check into the **Renaissance Mayflower Hotel**, four blocks from the White House. I admit, it's a thrill to be in the same hotel where F.D.R. thought up the line about "fear itself" and where Winston stay

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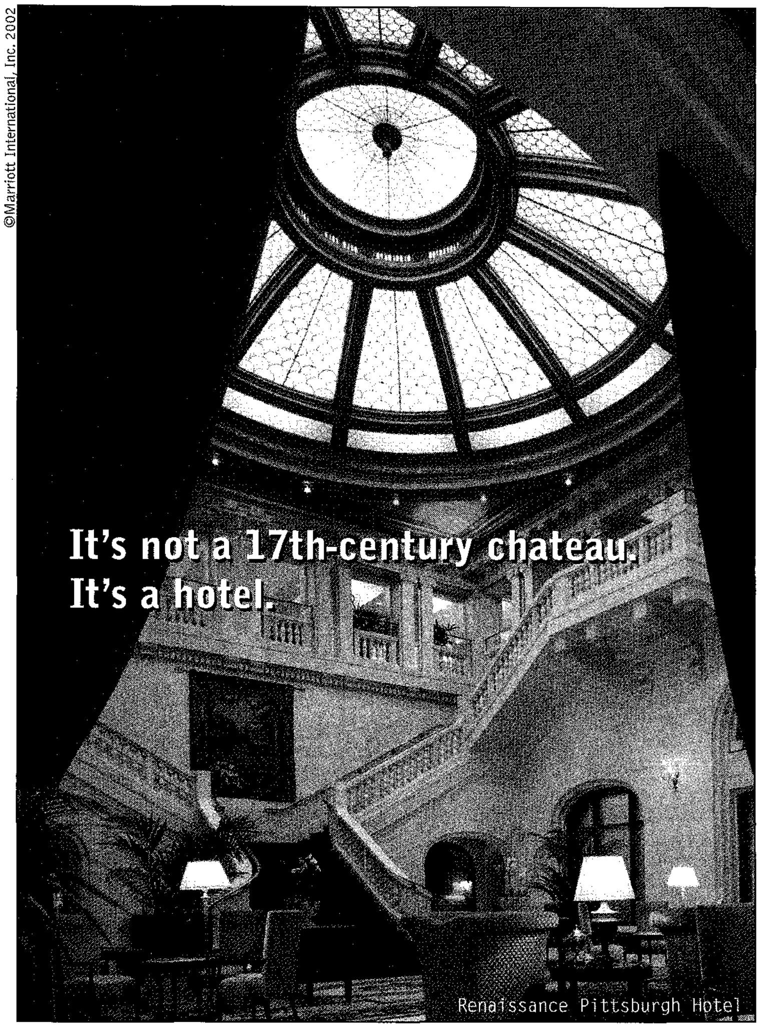
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interesting℠

Churchill once sat for his definitive portrait with artist Douglas Chandor.

Built in 1925, the Mayflower has seen it all and still looks great; its gold-leaf trim is as bright as when it opened. A skylight bathes the magnificence of its lobby, and the gods of grain and wine, in plaster relief, welcome me (along with all of the pols and pundits in town) to her elegant promenade. The Café Promenade remains a big power scene, as does the Town and Country Lounge, where bartender Sam Lek has built up his own power base by remembering what all of his regulars drink.

The Mayflower's stories could fill volumes, with separate chapters for everything from John F. Kennedy's blizzard-struck inaugural ball to the celeb guests who were installed during one president's impeachment and another's contested election. "Fame is routine for us," says the general manager, George Cook. Yet it still thrills him, he admits, being host to everyone from movie and rock stars visiting the White House to foreign heads of state.

The Renaissance Toronto Hotel has no less proximity to the significant players than the Mayflower does—only the celebs play ball rather than politics (not that politicos don't). The Toronto hotel is located right in the SkyDome and has seventy rooms overlooking the Blue Jays' playing field. For baseball fans, it doesn't get any better than this. Although I can barely tell a box score from a box lunch, the location is perfect for me too. It's next door to the CN Tower, known for its expansive view, and very close to the lakefront, where I can catch a ferry to the tree-bowered walkways of Centre Island. Best of all, it puts me within easy strolling distance of two of the greatest food showcases in North America: the Kensington Market, near Chinatown, and the nineteenth-century St. Lawrence Market, by the harbor. Here I can, and do, snack on everything from Indian goat roti to New England farm cheddars. And that's only the appetizer for whichever of the city's cuisine I may wish to choose for dinner. A diverse selection can be found close by, including restaurants in such charming neighborhoods as Toronto's Little Italy and Greektown.

The great variety of local fare is what most surprises visitors, according to the Renaissance's head concierge, Carolina Avaria. But great cuisine is not the only thing the hotel is touting when it calls itself "Toronto's new urban resort." Among other diversions, it offers the largest fitness facility in the downtown area, with five international squash courts, all manner of equipment, aerobic and aqua classes, and an exceptionally large swimming pool. It also has what may be the ultimate in inner-city convenience—a nine-hole golf course right next door.

When it comes to gourmandise, dining well in New Orleans goes without saying. Yet to find the classic French homestyle food I love so much at Rene Bistrot in the **Renaissance Pere Marquette**—well, that's a little bit of heaven. Lured by the opportunity to work his New Orleans magic in a more intimate venue than he commanded as the executive chef at the Five Diamond/Five Star Grill at Windsor Court, Rene Bajeux established a new eatery that has become a cornerstone of the hotel. Now, the French-born chef says, "I've gone back to my roots. I do everything in-house—smoking, sausages, patés, everything. I cook the *choucroute* like my mother did. I make the duck with vinegar and honey the old-fashioned way—and my customers love it. These are things that have stood the test of time."

And so has the setting for his new restaurant. The edifice housing the Pere Marquette was originally constructed as an office building in 1925, when its eighteen stories made it the city's first skyscraper. The Art Deco exterior is protected by landmark status, but the interior underwent a complete renovation that fortuitously turned up nine hundred concealed slabs of Italian white marble. The marble now adds to the cool stylishness of the hotel, located only blocks from Preservation Hall, where New Orlean's musicians still gather. In the hotel lobby jazz plays continuously, celebrating the structure's Jazz Age origins.

Such evocative details are what I cherish about a hotel. For me, it's not the data ports or the multichannel cable TV—though I would miss these if they weren't there! I want to check into a place at the center of things, where the present and history mix—that's what makes me feel like I'm a city's most fortunate guest.

(Nao Hauser is a New York freelance food and travel writer.)

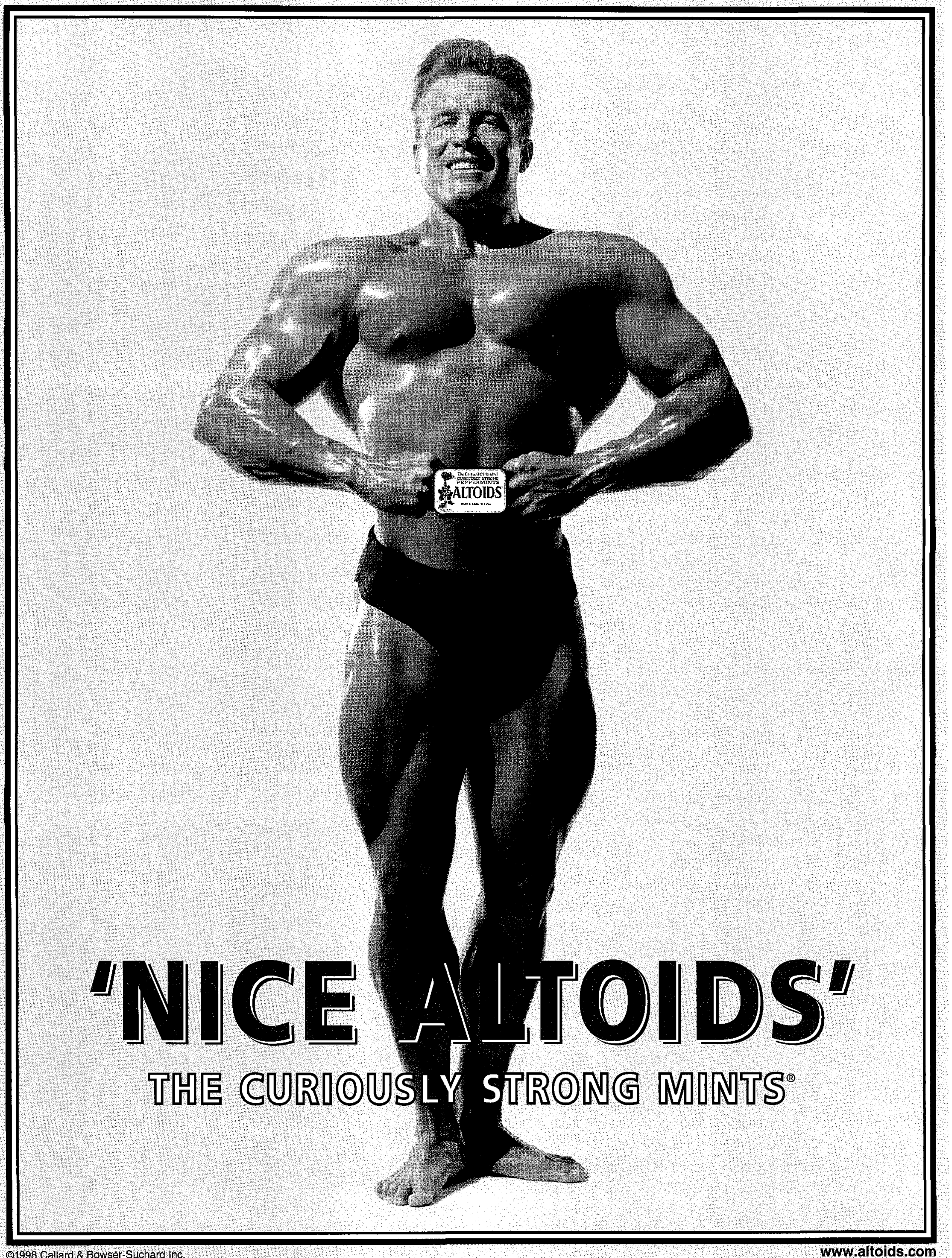
POSTMARK
renaissance

Traditional elegance at the Renaissance Mayflower Hotel in Washington, D.C.

Whimsy and glamour at the Renaissance Hollywood Hotel.

Watch SkyDome games from the comfort of the bar at the Renaissance Toronto Hotel.

For reservations at Renaissance Hotels, call your travel agent or 800-HOTELS-1 or visit www.renaissancehotels.com.



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THE
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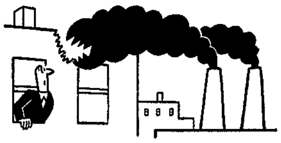
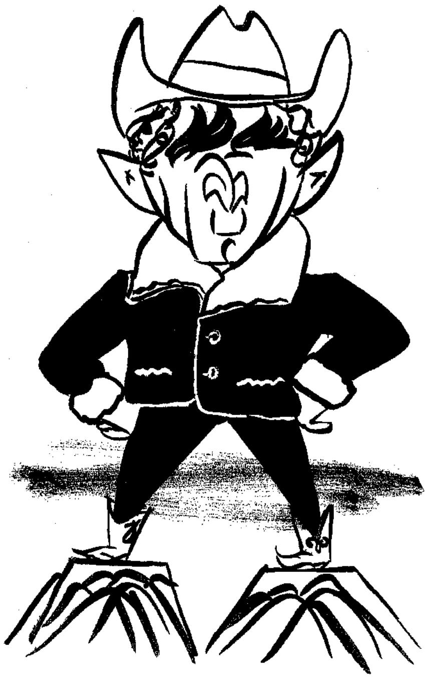
THE TALK OF THE TOWN

COMMENT
BAD ENVIRONMENTS



Many of the mountains of West Virginia have no tops. These were "removed," as in the mining practice known as "mountaintop removal," by companies seeking to get at the coal beneath. Earlier this month, one of the few limits on this highly efficient, if unfastidious, process was lifted, thanks to the efforts of the National Mining Association and the Bush Administration. Under the change, miners would be free to dump the waste, reclassified as "fill," pretty much wherever they wanted to, including in rivers and streams. Even though such dumping permits have been granted in the past, the change, which the association had sought, unsuccessfully, from the Clinton Administration, represents perhaps the most significant rollback of the Clean Water Act since it was passed, in 1972, and, according to a federal court decision issued in West Virginia last week, is of dubious legality. "It's not a giveaway to the mining industry," Christie Whitman, the head of the Environmental Protection Agency, said, defending the giveaway.

If it appears from the outside that the Bush Administration has relinquished the regulatory process to the regulated industries, it appears that way from the inside as well. The week before the new mining rules were finalized, Vice-President Dick Cheney's energy task force reluctantly handed over the unexpurgated records of its internal correspondence. (Two groups, the Natural Resources Defense Council and Judicial Watch, had sued the Administration for the records under the Freedom of Information Act.) "If you were King, or Il Duce, what would you include in a national energy policy, especially with respect to natural gas issues?" one e-mail sent by a staff member to a natural-gas-industry lobbyist asked. Several high-level E.P.A. officials have recently quit the agency, citing the impossibility of doing their jobs. "The E.P.A. is in the back seat, or maybe even riding the bumper, and the energy industry is having a field day," said Eric Schaeffer, shortly after resigning as the agency's chief of civil enforcement.



It was probably to be expected that two transplanted Texas oilmen would have little sympathy for federal environmental regulation. Still, the confidence with which Bush and Cheney have moved ahead is remarkable, especially when contrasted with the record of their predecessors. Despite Al Gore's reputation as a zealot, he and Bill Clinton proposed only incremental changes in environmental policy—rationalizing the stewardship of public lands and eliminating some of the most gaping loopholes in the nation's anti-pollution laws. Even so, Congress fought them nearly every step of the way.

President Bush has managed to undo most of the modest gains they made with almost no effort. Within months of taking office, he had scuttled new standards for arsenic in drinking water, pulled out of the Kyoto treaty on global warming, and rejected stricter fuel-efficiency standards. Since then, his Administration has expedited the permit-granting process for power companies, enabled logging companies to build new roads in national forests, and sought to open the Alaskan wilderness to oil exploration. Just last month, the Administration sabotaged the reëlection of Robert Watson, an American scientist who was the head of the Intergovernmental

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM BACHTELL

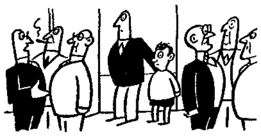
Panel on Climate Change, largely, it seems, because he favored actually doing something about the problem. Currently, the President is touting his "clear skies" initiative—a regulatory program that, in spite of its ecologically fuzzy title, was deliberately devised to allow older power plants to pollute more freely. Such is the mood in environmental circles that it was considered a major victory recently when the Administration agreed *not* to scrap Clinton-era regulations on diesel emissions. "It is now painfully clear that this is the most anti-environmental Presidential Administration ever," Gregory Wetstone, the director of programs at the Natural Resources Defense Council, observed to the Washington *Post* on Earth Day.

The ambitiousness of Bush's agenda and the comparative timidity of Clinton's is partly a product of political style—a willingness to take risks versus a deep reluctance to. But the problem is more ingrained than that. Not long ago, the Democratic-led Senate took up the issue of stricter fuel-efficiency standards, only to reject the idea. At one moment during the debate, the Senate Minority Leader, Trent Lott, exhibited a picture of a Smart car as if he were a lawyer prosecuting a multiple homicide. Pointing to the ultra-efficient and—necessarily—small automobile, which is popular in cities like Paris and Rome, he suggested that it would be an offense for anyone in the United States to consider driving one. "This is still America," he declared.

And, indeed, it is. Most Americans would probably say that it is wrong to leave decisions of national importance, like the fate of rivers and mountaintops, and of global significance, like the future of the climate, to a small group of self-interested industry insiders. Yet if the decisions reached by the President and his inner circle actually struck at core American values, or were even just inconsistent with the lives we live, it is hard to believe that the Administration would have been able to accomplish so much in so little time. Whether you date the inception of the American environmental movement all the way back to John Muir or only to Rachel Carson, it has a long history. As the past sixteen months suggest, however, its achievements, if not quite illusory, are painfully fragile.

—*Elizabeth Kolbert*

INK
PREP-SCHOOL NOVELIST



Nick McDonell is a Harvard-bound eighteen-year-old with sandy-blond hair, blue eyes, a heavy brow, and a satirical first novel. It is called "Twelve," and its subject is underage depravity in the 10021 Zip Code. Thirty thousand copies of the novel will be printed by Grove/Atlantic and released this summer, with a blurb by Hunter S. Thompson. (It has also been sold to publishers in Europe, Australia, and Japan.) A member of his family's thirteenth consecutive all-male generation and the president of the student body at Riverdale, Nick does what is expected of him: backflips, Latin homework, his best to impress girls, the 110-metre hurdles ("I'm the fastest white kid in the city"), the triple jump, no illegal substances, his roommate questionnaire for Harvard ("Hours: 6 A.M. to 4 A.M."), and fearsome stunts involving a Razor scooter and the steps of the Metropolitan Museum. He also sometimes does not do what is expected of him, or what has lately been requested of him: take off his shirt for *Details*, although whether he has entertained the idea is a matter of some debate between him and his friends Mookie and Margo.

NICK: I was not considering it.

MARGO: Yes, you were.

NICK: No, I wasn't. That would destroy my credibility forever.

MARGO: No, it wouldn't. It would make you a sex symbol.

MOOKIE: And maybe that's the price you have to pay.

As a new tenth grader at Riverdale, Nick was known as the kid who raised his hand in history class to say things like "Wasn't William II's belligerent militarism indicative of the general sense of anger among the Prussian people?" "Indicative," Mookie says, is Nick's favorite word, but Nick (who is not a thesaurus user) likes to sample from all linguistic registers. This year, in assembly, he welcomed Riverdale's freshman class with a big "Boo yah"—a sort of rowdier version of "Right on."

That is very "Twelve"—exactly the dialect of Timmy and Mark Rothko, a pair of baby stoners in the book, who, in one chapter, ask, incredulously, "Fuckin' Forty-fifth Street? What in the damn shiz fo a niz?" when what they really mean is "Why would we go to Forty-fifth Street?" Nick the novelist is a ruthless observer of clothing: Timmy and Mark Rothko wear FUBU (For Us By Us); Nick's characters also wear low-top black Nikes, zip-up Kevin Garnett sneakers, North Face, Quicksilver, Prada, and Coach. But Nick, as Margo says, is "definitely not a traditional backward-hat-wearing, baggy-jeaned, polo-shirted, trendy, Puma-wearing, I-don't-shave-every-morning-just-to-prove-I-can-grow-facial-hair kind of high-school boy." He is the kind who wears an oversized white shirt, which Margo and Mookie refer to as a "frock." Nick's comeback: "Whatever, man. It's linen!"

Recently, at a dinner party given by his publisher at a restaurant in Greenwich Village, Nick was wearing dark-blue jeans and a khaki shirt. Morgan Entrekin, the publisher of Grove/Atlantic, introduced him as a writer he'd known since he was forty-eight hours old. (Nick's father, Terry, is a magazine editor and an old friend of Entrekin's.) Nick seemed a bit embarrassed, and a little out of his element, even though he's been going to parties with Entrekin, well, probably since he was about forty-eight hours old. Seated near Nick, at the host's table, was a man twice Nick's age, who may have had literary aspirations.

MAN: So how long did you take?

NICK: It took about a year—

MAN: But do you know how rare that is? And you know your second book might not come out so fast?

Nick bowed his head.

MAN: So what's it about?

NICK: It's based on the place I grew up in, and the myths of that place.

MAN: Where's that?

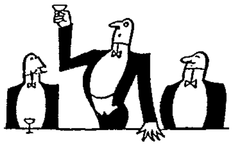
NICK: Here. Well, not *here* here. Upper Manhattan.

Toward the end of the evening, the writer Jay McInerney came over to the table. He planted his leg on a backward chair and assumed the lecturing position. "It's been a long time, Nick." He started to deliver some wistful-sounding advice about how to resist the temptations that fame would offer. He interrupted himself; he decided that he needed his friend Bret Easton Ellis as backup. "I can't do this without Bret," he said. "We're going to have to take you to dinner."

"Foh shizza my drizzle" ("Sure thing"), Mark Rothko might have said. Nick politely accepted the invitation.

—*Dana Goodyear*

MEN IN DRESSES DEPT.
REMEMBERING MILTON BERLE



About two hundred and fifty people packed the Friars Club the other day for a memorial tribute to Milton Berle, Abbot Emeritus of the ninety-eight-year-old fraternal association, which is made up mostly of entertainers and comics. Berle was a loyal and active Friar until his death, at the age of ninety-three, earlier this spring, and he was regularly honored by fellow-Friars for his many practical efforts on their behalf, but especially for bravely leading the way in the cause of irreverence, without limits.

The mourners were decidedly unsombre as they greeted one another, with backslaps and hugs. Old-timers in snappy jackets and unmatching pants got kisses planted on their cheeks by younger Friars in dark suits. Soupy Sales, wearing a brown plaid jacket, limped in with a cane and waved cheerfully. Professor Irwin Corey, long gray hair hanging over his collar, shuffled to his seat, but stood there looking affectionately at the crowd, as though he were on the verge of doing his old bumbling-lecturer act.

The tribute was in the hands of Freddie Roman, who has been a Friar for thirty-two years. He introduced a video with scenes from some of Berle's popular early television shows: Berle mugging with Martha Raye; Berle pulling open Jerry Lewis's mouth; Dean Martin pulling open Berle's mouth; Berle with Edward G. Robinson, with Elvis Presley, with Frank Sinatra, and others. There was a closeup of Berle's cigar in an ashtray, while he said, in a voice-over, "You're looking at a very changed man." And then the camera moved up and showed Berle—in a floppy blond wig and a blue dress—making a move on Jackie Gleason, who responded with a long, icy Jackie Gleason stare. The TV audience and the memorial participants howled as one.

After the video, a tiny, wiry gentleman with a thatch of white hair approached the lectern. He was so short that the top of his head didn't reach the Friars' seal. Freddie Roman raised satanic eyebrows at him and said sharply, "Mickey, stand up!" Mickey Freeman (Private Zimmerman on "Sergeant Bilko") retreated, but shouted to Roman, "I could have been taller, but I turned it down!"

"I have a funny feeling I should be wearing a dress with my two front teeth blacked out," Freddie Roman said. He paused and gave the audience a look suggesting that big mischief was on the way. "We are here to honor Milton Berle, who passed away on March 27th," he went on. "On May 1st and May 2nd, his penis will be buried." The laughter was long and knowing. Dozens more Milton Berle penis jokes followed. Friar Bob Melvin said, "I saw him sink a four-foot putt with his penis."

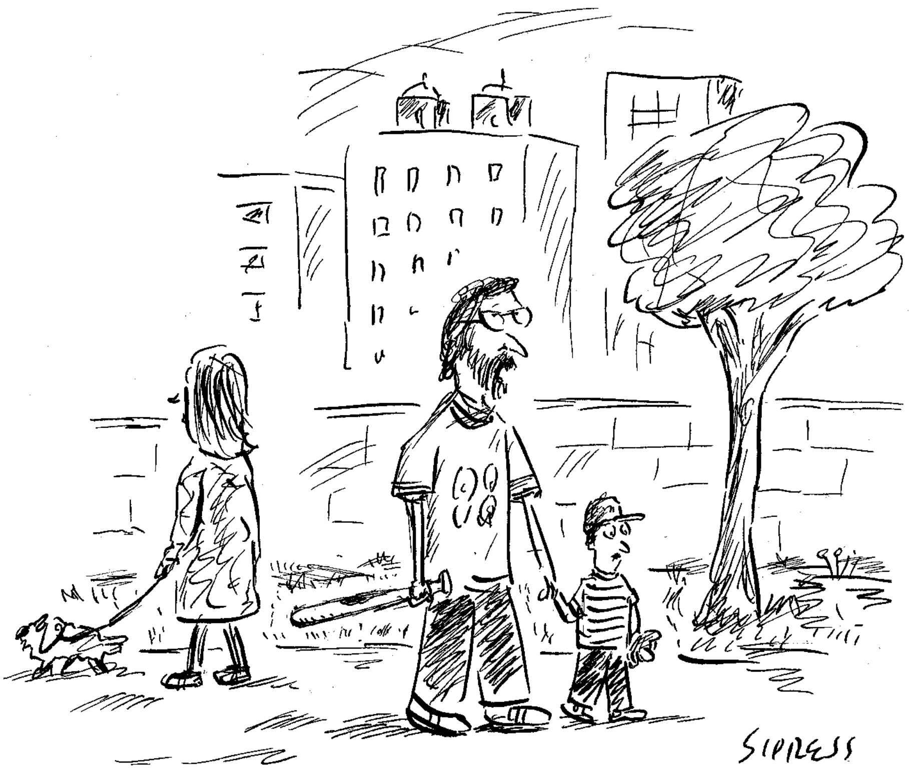
Friar Robert Klein sent a message from Dallas: "He even shtupped Aimee Semple McPherson, the Christian evangelist, and was not converted, though *she* was."

A cell phone in somebody's pocket rang. Roman looked annoyed for all of one second, then quickly said, "If that's my mother, tell her I took a sweater." Loud laughter.

Some earnest appreciations followed. One speaker referred to Berle as "a great human being." Roman said, " 'A great human being'? I loved Milton Berle, but 'a great human being'? "

Roman then called on a young comic, Jeffrey Ross, who was wearing a blue suit bought for the occasion. Ross first read a message from Friar Buddy Hackett, in California, saying that Berle was "a world-class star who never acted more important than the opening act on a twelve-act bill." Ross reminisced about Berle giving him fatherly advice and teaching him how to smoke cigars. "Thanks to Milton Berle, I now have two humidors and asthma," he said. Big laugh.

After more reminiscences, Friar Dick Capri got up and told Milton Berle's favorite story. "Milton got instructions from a lawyer who told him, when he was in court, to say only three things as answers to any questions he was asked: 'Yes,' 'No,' or 'I don't remember.' So they get to court, and Milton is asked questions, and he says, 'I'm the greatest comedian in the world.' Outside, the lawyer is irate, and he says, 'Why did you say that?'



"Daddy doesn't hate the Yankees. Daddy has issues with the Yankees."

And Milton says, 'I was under oath.' "

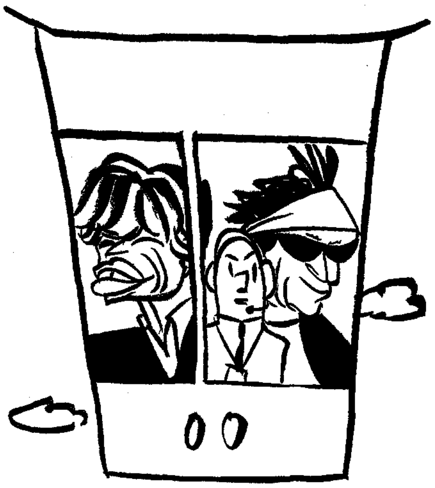
With that, Freddie Roman said that the tribute was over.

—Lillian Ross

NO MOSS DEPT.

WHEN THE BLIMP COMES DOWN

Best ever Rolling Stones tour publicity stunt? No contest. "Flatbed truck," James Karnbach said. He was standing behind a fence in Van Cortlandt Park, in the Bronx, where the Stones were scheduled to announce a new world tour to an audience of media and media-credentialled fans. He had on a black tennis hat and thick eyeglasses, and was pointing a video camera across a giant field to the patch of grass where the band—Mick, Keith, Charlie, Ronnie—was disembarking from the cockpit of a customized blimp. Photographers charged across the field. Under a big tent set up for a press conference, a layout of cheese and chocolate melted in the heat, and "Sticky Fingers" played good and loud.



Mick and Keith, in a blimp.

Karnbach was referring to the time, in 1975, when the Stones rode down Fifth Avenue on a flatbed truck, performing "Brown Sugar," to promote a concert tour. It was the best Rolling Stones tour publicity stunt because the band actually played music. But Karnbach missed it. "Tickets to the shows went on sale that same day," he said. "I had to go get tickets." Karnbach has been following the Stones—though he might prefer the term "covering"—since he saw them on television in 1964, on "The Hollywood Palace." He is what you might call an archivist, and has co-authored a few Stones books (including "It's Only Rock 'n' Roll: The Ultimate Guide to the Rolling Stones") and done research for some of their film projects. He leans toward the band's earlier work. His favorite album is "Aftermath"—"British version." Favorite Stone? "He's dead."

Out on the field, the surviving Stones wriggled and mugged, while Karnbach recalled other tour-promotion press conferences. Steel Wheels, 1989: The Stones rolled into Grand Central on a Metro-North train ("It was ninety degrees. They were late. It was horrible"). Voodoo Lounge, 1994: They chartered a yacht on the Hudson ("The pier was all right"). Bridges to Babylon, 1997: They crossed the Brooklyn Bridge in a red Cadillac ("Not bad"). Karnbach looked away from his video camera and surveyed the scene. "But this is a good one. I like this, with the blimp."

The blimp, which was bright yellow and emblazoned with the Stones' trademark red tongue, had merely conveyed the band from one end of the field to the other, with a little flying around thrown in for effect. Now it was moored on the grass, its work done. "Here they come!" somebody shouted. The Stones are little men, with a collective waist measurement of about a hundred inches, but they were walking big, as they usually do, knowing full well what a camera likes. As they approached, the tent filled up, and then the band took the stage, to prolonged applause and whoops of joy.

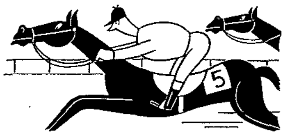
Mick Jagger opened the floor to questions. He ran the show ("Red-shirt guy at the back there," "Lady with the red stripy dress," "The lady in the black T-shirt, or dress, I can't really see"), but Keith Richards got the laughs. With each wisecrack ("In other words, when we think of it," "Yeah, that's you, babe," and the always reliable "Just depends if we can remember 'em"), he leaned forward, like Groucho, then half stumbled back, grinning to shouts of "All right, Keiiiiith!" For the benefit of a German correspondent, Jagger reeled off some of the band's destinations abroad. "Leipzig, Hannover, Hamburg, Munich, Nuremberg—so far that's it." Richards ranged into Jagger's space and growled, "A great collection of burgs." What laughter!

Afterward, the media poured out across the field. Just beyond a set of barricades, a crowd of civilians watched them leave. Some begged reporters for their now useless Stones press credentials. One woman held out a roll of bills and pointed to someone's press kit. "I'll pay you for it," she said.

—Nick Paumgarten

POSTSCRIPT

A NEW YORK HORSE

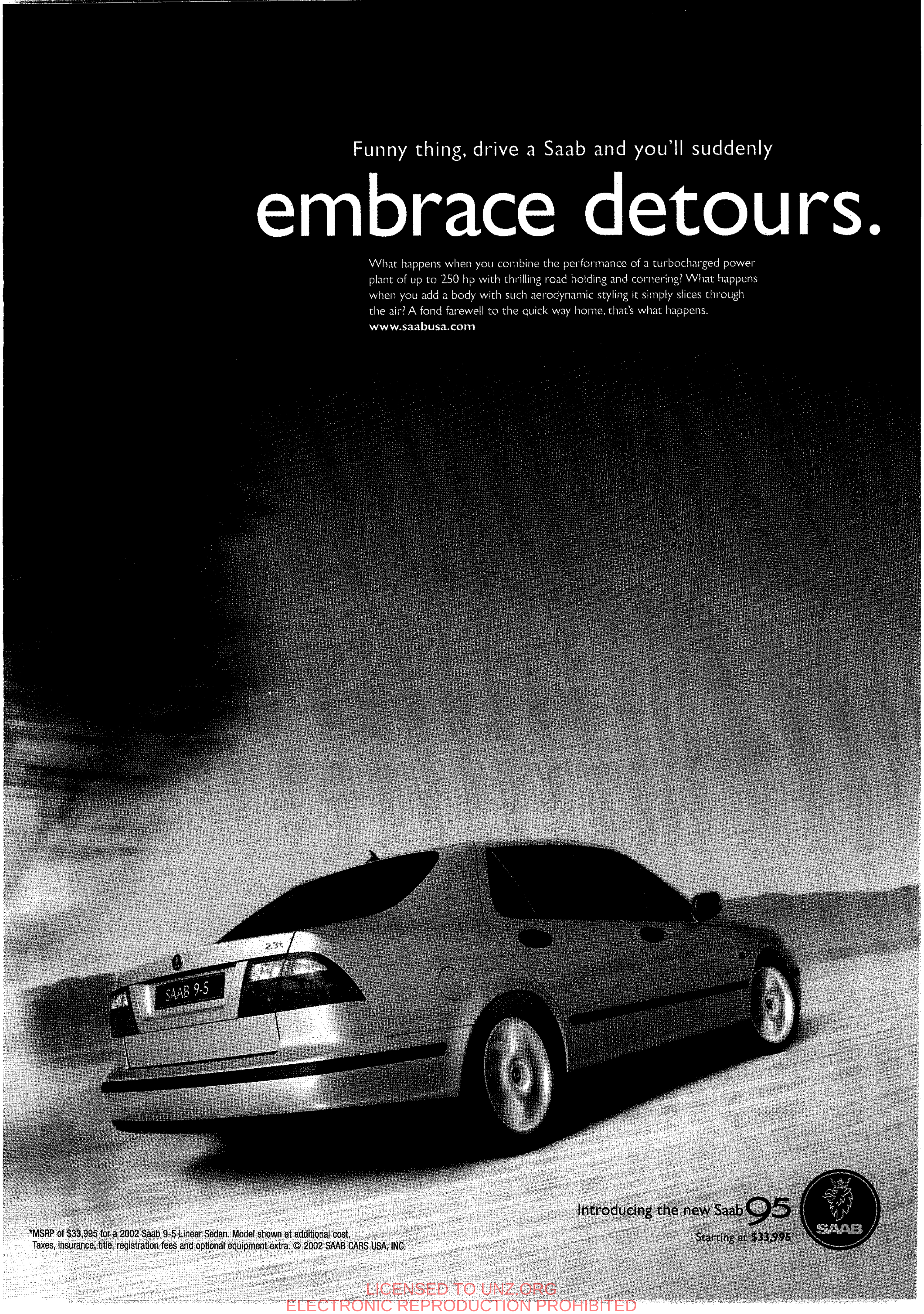


New Yorkers can be born anywhere. Then one day they just show up here and fit right in. Seattle Slew, who died last week, at the age of twenty-eight, was that sort of New Yorker. He had the native blend of showmanship and come-from-behind attitude, even though he was bred in Kentucky by a barkeep and bought at auction for $17,500 by a hard-partying gang of four (a logger, a stewardess, a veterinarian, and his wife). They bought him, as Karen Taylor (the stewardess) said, because "he had pizzazz and he gave you that eye."

As long as Slew was a racehorse, New York was home: he ran twelve of his seventeen races in New York or in the Meadowlands, notching ten of his fourteen wins here, including his first, his last, and his most important, when he clinched the Triple Crown. "He'd have probably taken to running over broken beer bottles," said Mickey Taylor (the logger, who was wearing a powder-blue three-piece suit the day Slew won the Derby). "But he thrived off people."

Well, not exactly. Slew was notoriously standoffish, in the style of the era, with a habit of offering his backside to the visiting press. "And you pretty much had to drug him to the tunnel," Mickey said. But as soon as he hit the track, and saw the crowds, something turned on, and he'd start doing what the Taylors called his war hoop. Until he stepped into the starting gate, Mickey said, "he never had four feet on the ground at any time. It got to be quite a show."

—Kevin Conley



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THE FINANCIAL PAGE

DOOM, INCORPORATED

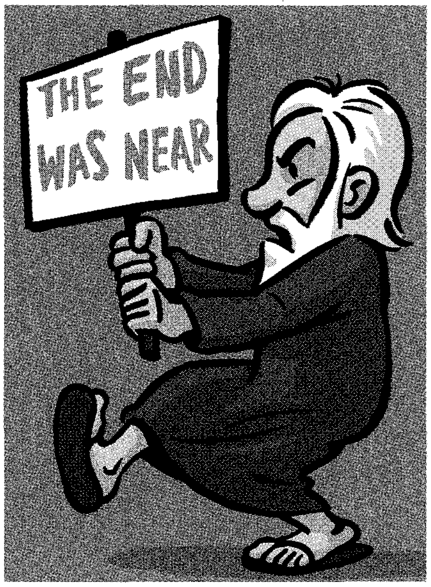
In the summer of 2000, a Wall Street star was born. Ravi Suria, a young bond analyst at Lehman Brothers, issued a twenty-seven-page indictment of Amazon.com, depicting it as an inept company with poor credit and "the financial characteristics that have driven innumerable retailers to disaster throughout history." Without radical changes, he said, the company would run out of cash within a year.

The market's reaction was swift and severe. Although technically Suria's report dealt with Amazon's convertible bonds, not its stock, the company's share price fell nineteen per cent in a single day. Suria soon found himself anointed the new wise man of Wall Street, embraced by investors and the financial press. One columnist wrote that Suria's report was a "must-read" (hardly your typical reaction to the analysis of a convertible bond). "A needed wake-up call," said *Business Week*. "Giant killer," said *Fortune*. Before long, Suria had become the best-known bond analyst in America.

Suria was the man for a moribund market. By the time his report came out, the dot-com bubble had been pricked—Amazon's stock was already down sixty-three per cent from its high. Investors and the media were primed to believe the worst, and Suria gave it to them. In 1998, Henry Blodget, a relatively anonymous equity analyst, had issued his now infamous sky's-the-limit forecast on Amazon, and it made him a star. But by the summer of 2000 the sky wasn't the limit—it was falling, and Suria's grim predictions seemed spot on.

And Suria kept them coming. In October of 2000, he cautioned investors against Amazon's bonds. Then, in February, 2001, he argued that a steady decline in Amazon's working capital—that's current assets minus current liabilities—spelled serious trouble. By the second half of 2001, he predicted, Amazon could face a "creditor squeeze," meaning that the companies that supply it with goods might demand harsher payment terms, or even halt shipments. By year's end, he suggested, Amazon's cash hoard would dwindle to almost nothing, and the company would owe more than it could pay. The media swooned. "THIS GUY IS GOOD!" one headline read. By last spring, when Suria left Lehman to work for a hedge fund, nearly everyone, it seemed, was waiting for Amazon to die.

A funny thing happened, though, on Amazon's way to the grave: it got up and started dancing around the room. It has earned operating profits in the last two quarters. Three weeks ago, the company reported first-quarter numbers that far exceeded analysts' expectations (higher sales, lower expenses), prompting stories that brought back the heady days of 1998. ("Has Amazon.com become the Wal-Mart of the Internet?" the Seattle *Times* wondered.) Suria had said that the company would finish 2001 with a hundred and twenty-five million dollars in the bank. Instead, it had a billion dollars. He'd foreseen Amazon's working capital plummeting below zero, yet it's still decidedly positive, and higher today than it was six months ago. As for the much ballyhooed creditor squeeze? It never happened. Suria was even wrong about Amazon's bonds. They're up about fifty per cent since he last counselled investors to avoid them.



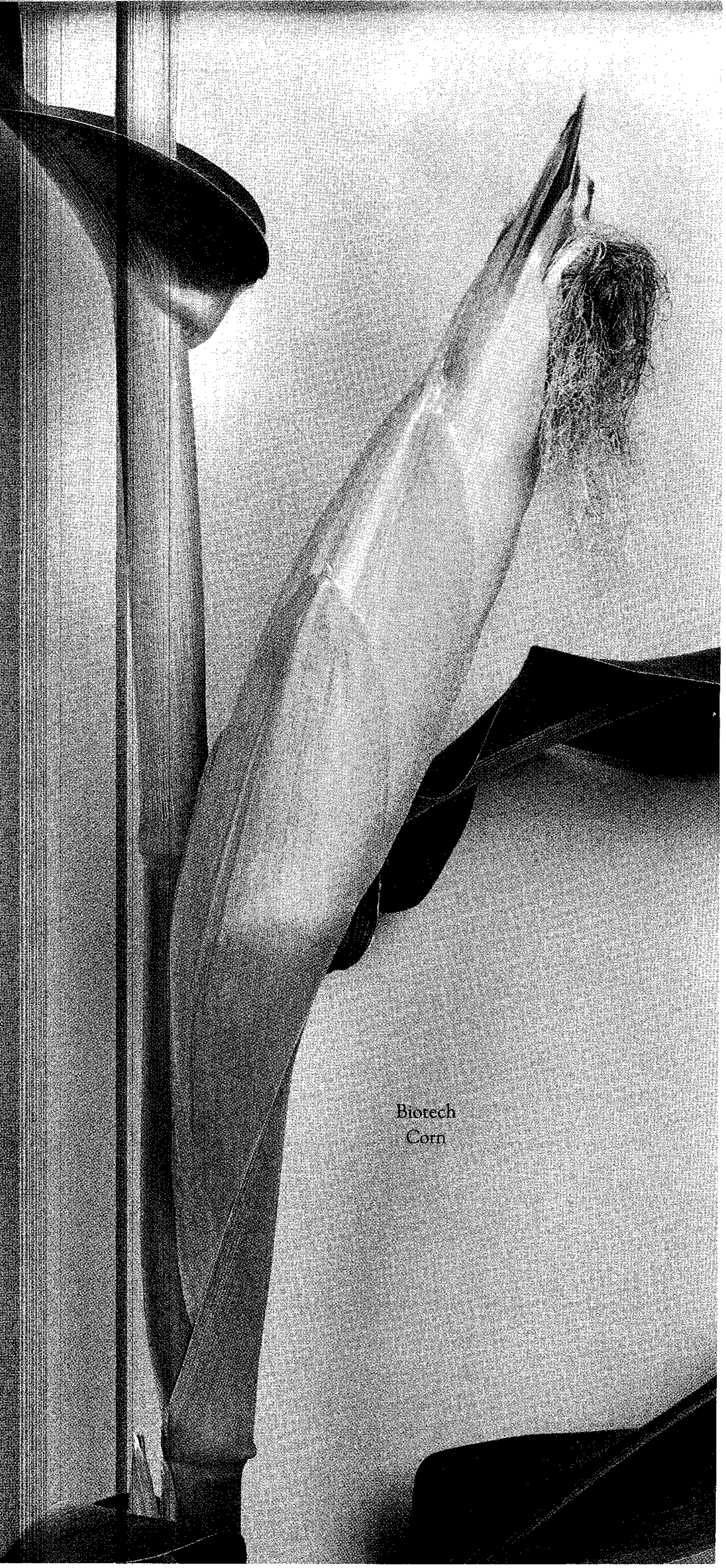
CHRISTOPH NIEMANN

You wouldn't know it to read the papers. Instead of acknowledging that the dire predictions were overblown, both Wall Street and the media have adopted a revisionist spin. Amazon, the story goes, really was at death's door, but, thanks to Suria and his fellow-critics, it shaped up, "stanched the hemorrhaging of cash," and brought itself "back from the brink." In other words, only because everyone so lustily cried wolf did the wolf fail to appear.

But there never was any wolf. The crisis was imaginary, and Amazon did not really change its business model. Rather, it has followed the strategy it laid out in the nineties, investing heavily in giant distribution centers in 1999 and 2000 and slashing its distribution and fulfillment costs later. That has allowed Amazon to turn over its inventory as fast as any retailer in America, and to increase sales—even in a slowing economy—while spending next to nothing. (Last year, Amazon spent fifty million dollars on new facilities and equipment. Wal-Mart spent $8.4 billion—more than twice as much per dollar of sales.) The crepe hangers believed that Amazon's future would look exactly like its past—steep losses, rising inventories, free spending. The company had promised otherwise. But no one listened.

Of course, there's no shame in being wrong. It's what happens when you make predictions. (And Suria has made some good ones—he did anticipate the telecom meltdown.) But Amazon's doomsayers have been handed a free pass, in large part because their gimlet-eyed skepticism reflects the presiding mood on Wall Street. Stock analysts naturally concentrate on the upside, because you only buy a stock if you think a company is going to do better than expected. Bond analysts are congenitally dour, worrying, as they must, whether or not a company will go belly up and what will be left of it when it does. These days, we like our analysts dismal and po-faced, which is one reason that someone like Suria has been let off the hook, while stock-market cheerleaders like Blodget and Mary Meeker have been hung out to dry. In the post-Enron era, nobody wants to hear the bad news about the bad news.

—*James Surowiecki*



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U.S. JOURNAL

A YEAR OF TROUBLE

A city subverts itself.

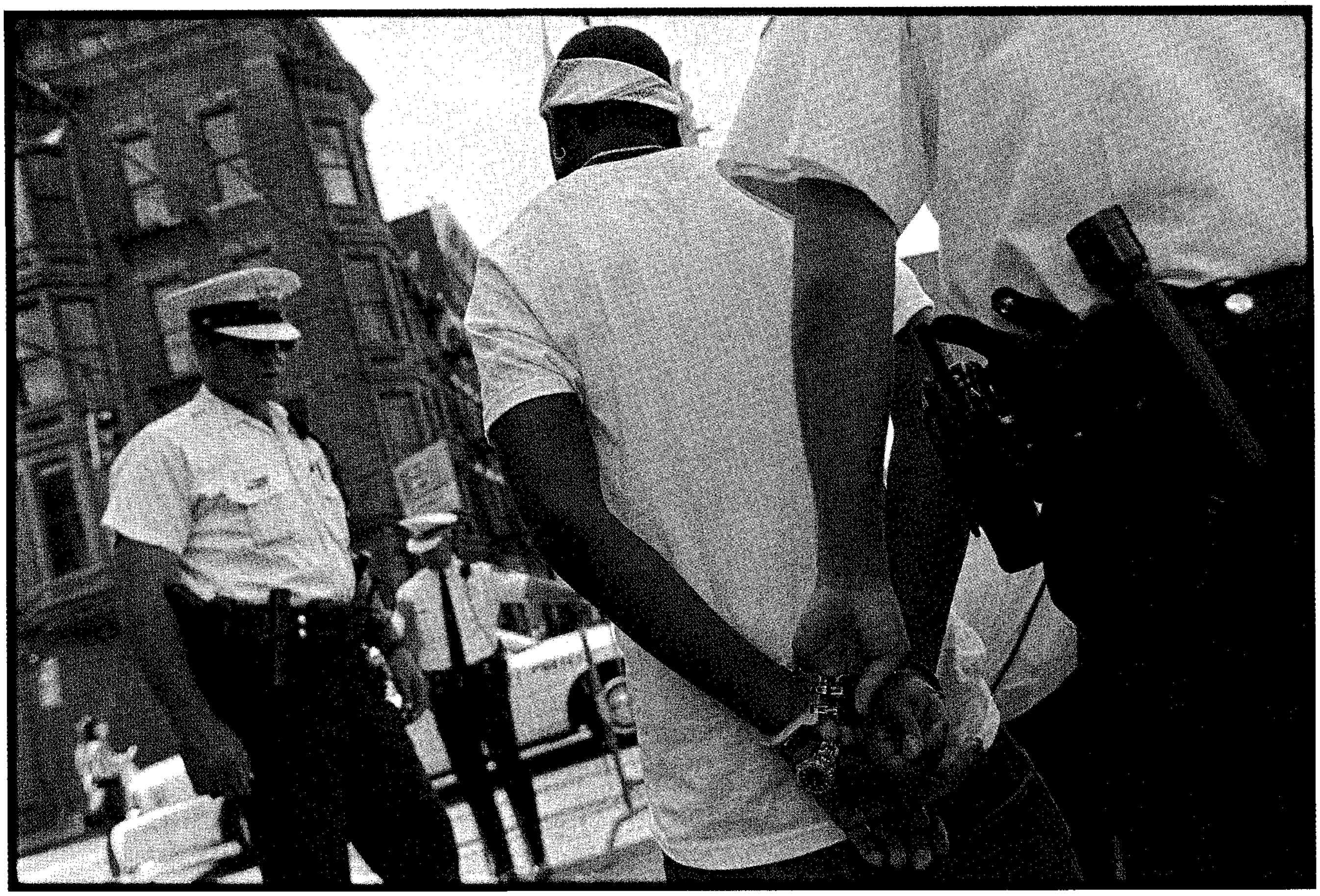
BY MARK SINGER

CINCINNATI, OHIO

Late on the night of Friday, April 6, 2001, so late it was already well into Saturday morning, a young man named Timothy Thomas went out for a pack of cigarettes in a near-downtown Cincinnati neighborhood known as Over-the-Rhine. Thomas lived a few miles away, with his mother, stepfather, younger sister, and other members of their extended family, but he spent weekends in Over-the-Rhine because his girlfriend, Monique Wilcox, and their three-month-old son, Tywon, shared a two-bedroom apartment with her mother and her sister on Republic Street, a characteristically dismal-looking block in a once gloriously vibrant part of town. Heading back from the convenience store, Thomas passed a night club. One of the club's security guards, an off-duty police officer, recognized him; at the time, Thomas was the object of fourteen arrest warrants, twelve arising from relatively minor traffic offenses and the other two from obstruction-of-justice misdemeanors (specifically, running from the police). For reasons that remain open to conjecture, he started running again.

During the next few minutes, he covered a lot of ground. He ran east and then south, doubled back, sprinted through a parking lot, scaled two chain-link fences, one topped with barbed wire, and wound up in an L-shaped alley. Several policemen joined the pursuit, and one of them, Stephen Roach, jumped from his cruiser on Republic Street and entered the alley. Roach, who had been on the Cincinnati police force for almost four years, had his 9-mm. Smith & Wesson drawn and his finger on the trigger. As Thomas turned the corner in the alley, Roach ordered, "Show me your hands!" Before Thomas had a chance to comply, Roach shot him in the chest. When three fellow-officers arrived, moments later, Roach's explanation for what had happened was "It just went off. It just went off." Under questioning that same day by homicide investigators, Roach offered a different rationale: Thomas had extended a clenched fist, he couldn't see what was in the fist, and he feared for his life. During an interrogation three days later, when confronted with a videotape recorded by another police unit at the scene—the tape revealed that Roach had fired his weapon three and a half seconds after entering the alley—he reverted to a narrative in which the shooting was accidental. The internal investigation report said that Thomas was wounded at 2:16 A.M. An ambulance delivered him to a hospital where, just after 3 A.M., he was pronounced dead.

Because Timothy Thomas perished in the manner he did—an unarmed African-American, shot by a white police officer, the fifteenth black person killed by Cincinnati policemen during a six-year period in which no white suspects died—he has exerted a forceful and resonant influence over subsequent events in that city, something he hardly seemed destined to do while he was alive. Among certain groups of people in certain parts of town, he has been elevated to a celebrity status a few rungs shy of apotheosis. Throughout the metropolitan area, which has a population of almost two million, most people know his name. When his path crossed Officer Roach's, Thomas was a dyslexic nineteen-year-old with a high-school general-equivalency diploma, an off-and-on minimum-wage job as a laborer, and nothing in the way of more lucrative employment prospects. As a father, he was not exactly poised to shape for his infant son a future any brighter than his own. He was, in other words, a disheartening archetype—one among the millions of non-upwardly-mobile young men whom we, as a nation, have shown far more readiness to arrest and lock up (or, insidiously, to ignore completely) than to welcome into the mainstream of American social and civic experience. In the year or so since he was killed, the citizens of Cincinnati have grappled painfully and earnestly, as well as clumsily and rancorously, with the import and consequences of Thomas's life and death.

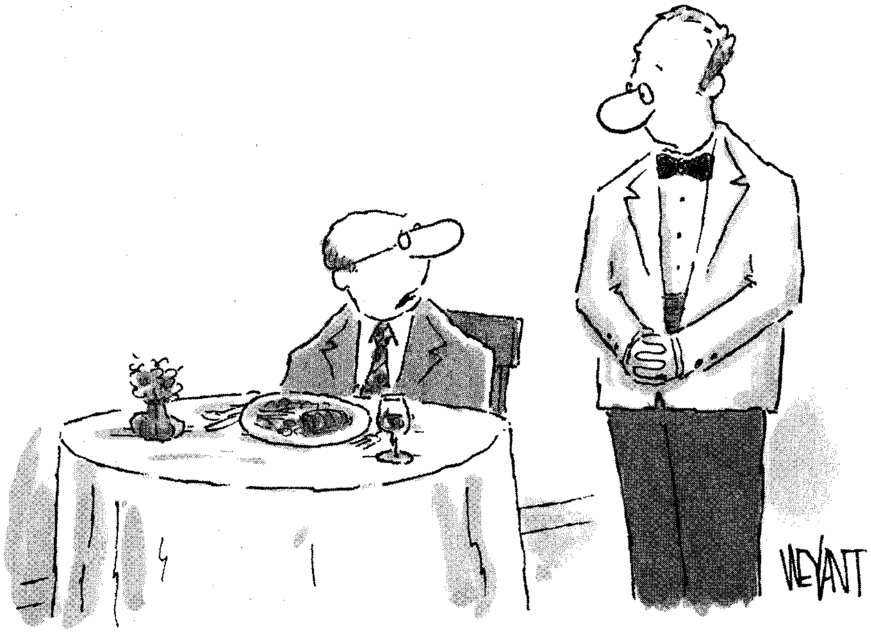


Three days of violence followed the shooting of Timothy Thomas last spring in Cincinnati. Photograph by James Nachtwey.

The killing ignited protest rallies, civil disobedience, and three days of mayhem in Over-the-Rhine and other neighborhoods—what media reports in Cincinnati and beyond described as riots but what many black people, investing these events with the gravity of a cumulative historic struggle, insist upon calling a rebellion or an uprising. The city called it a state of emergency and enforced an 8 P.M. curfew. By the time order was restored, sixty-six people had been charged with felonies, eight hundred with misdemeanors. The damage, including police and medical costs, was estimated to be at least fourteen million dollars. One police officer was shot but not seriously wounded; remarkably, no one died. Compared with the death and devastation that have accompanied racial unrest in other American cities in recent years—say, the riots in Los Angeles in 1992, after the acquittal of the policemen accused in the Rodney King beating case, which left more than fifty people dead and material losses of a billion dollars—what occurred in Cincinnati might be considered small potatoes. Nevertheless, it made big headlines when it happened, and in a variety of ways the city has paid a steep price ever since. "We were in the wrong place at the wrong time," a member of the City Council told me recently, his point being that the Thomas killing and its aftermath generated unwarranted notoriety. According to this logic, it was Cincinnati's bad luck to have uncorked a prime-time paroxysm of racial disharmony at a moment when, inconveniently, no other American city happened to be conspicuously doing the same.

What, if anything, ailed Cincinnati that set it apart? With hindsight, a lot of people in Cincinnati, black and white, maintain that what happened to Thomas was entirely predictable. Three weeks before he was shot, a civil-rights lawsuit was filed in federal court against the city, alleging a pattern of "discrimination in policing": a predilection for treating black people differently from whites, not only by stopping and searching them in disproportionate numbers (racial profiling) but by subjecting them to gratuitously intimidating tactics (dogs, pointed guns, chemical sprays, abusive language). These violations were compounded, the lawsuit maintained, by more than thirty years of politically expedient—but unfulfilled—promises from city officials to reform police practices. The plaintiffs in the suit included the American Civil Liberties Union and an organization called the Cincinnati Black United Front. Appended to the complaint were sworn declarations from thirty individuals who described specific mistreatment at the hands of law-enforcement personnel.

Five months before, an African-American named Roger Owensby, Jr., died in custody, while handcuffed, after being stopped for questioning in connection with a drug investigation. A coroner testified that Owensby had been



"No, there's nothing wrong with the food. I just needed a little attention."

• •

asphyxiated, possibly by a choke hold, while several officers piled on top of him because, they said, he tried to flee. (Before attempting to handcuff him, they had sprayed a chemical irritant in his face.) In January, 2001, two cops were indicted for their role in Owensby's death and removed from duty pending trial. Meanwhile, the City Council passed an ordinance requiring officers to file reports after every traffic stop, a tacit acknowledgment that racial profiling existed. This was the atmosphere in which the Thomas shooting took place.

When court records were scrutinized after Thomas's death, one hard-to-resist inference was that he was very familiar with racial profiling. To hear his mother, Angela Leisure, tell it, Thomas also had experiences that fit the definition of "discrimination in policing." A recent article in *CityBeat*, an alternative weekly, laid out the chronology of traffic offenses that led to the arrest warrants that led to the chase that terminated in the alley off Republic Street. During a sixty-six-day period in early 2000, the police stopped Thomas eleven times and wrote twenty-two citations, only one for a moving violation. Either Thomas was maddeningly obstinate or an unusually slow learner: eleven of the tickets were for driving without a license and six were for not wearing a seat belt. Once, he was cited for playing music too loudly, another time for driving a car with illegally tinted windows. The law-enforcement rationale for racial profiling of African-American motorists has been that such traffic stops often turn up evidence of criminal behavior—typically, illegal drugs or weapons. In Thomas's case, no such evidence materialized. Was he somehow baiting the cops? If so, it was a time-consuming diversion. He appeared in court nineteen times, and spent sixteen days in jail. There is, of course, no way of knowing what Thomas was thinking when the fatal final chase got under way. In any event, if the police were so eager to apprehend him, the simplest approach would have been for a couple of officers to go to his mother's home and knock on the door. He wasn't hard to find.

Angela Leisure migrated to Cincinnati from Chicago in 1997 because she wanted a better life for herself and her children. In Chicago, she had been raising Timothy (her eldest child, born a month before she turned fifteen), a daughter nine years younger, and six other children not her own, in the Robert Taylor Homes, the infamous paragon of how not to design a public-housing project. During a visit to Cincinnati, she was impressed because "I saw children playing outside unattended," she said. "There were no drive-by shootings, no filth, no gang writings on the walls." Once she relocated, however, she discovered other perils. She described for me an episode a year or so before Timothy died. Along with a cousin and a couple of other young men, she said, he was standing one afternoon in front of the building where they lived, in a neighborhood called Evanston, when they were suddenly accosted by policemen. "The police came up and slammed them against the wall," she said. "Then they got them down on the ground. It wasn't like they said, 'Get on the ground'—they literally threw them on the ground. Put the knee in the back, pulled the arms back, put cuffs on them, and searched them. But no one was arrested." A similar encounter occurred a few months later, she said, when Timothy was walking to a corner grocery store and abruptly found himself nose to the pavement, along with five or six other young men. "The police in Evanston have a habit of where they drive up and just jump out. They have this cowboy mentality. But very seldom anybody went to jail."

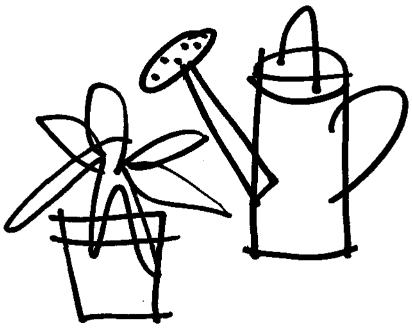
Thomas would be alive today, presumably, if he hadn't run from the off-duty cop who recognized him. So why did he? "My son had a fear of police officers," Leisure told me. "We had conversations about that. His thing was 'Mom, if they could do this to me in broad daylight with everybody watching, what would they do in the dark?' " Whatever else went through Thomas's and Roach's minds as they faced off in the alley, neither was in the presence of someone he instinctively trusted. Then the only one of them holding a gun fired it.

Once the riot or the rebellion or whatever it was subsided, some promising developments occurred. Two days after Thomas's funeral, the mayor, Charlie Luken, announced the formation of a task force on race relations called Cincinnati Community Action Now. He appointed three co-chairmen, among them the Reverend Damon Lynch III, a Baptist minister who was the head of the Black United Front, one of the lead plaintiffs in the lawsuit against the city. The Mayor had also formally invited the Department of Justice to investigate the police division, a politically astute move; better to extend a preëmptive welcome to the federal government's lawyers than to have them unilaterally impose new procedures and policies. Over the course of several months, the lawsuit and the federal investigation coalesced into a single mediation process known as the Collaborative. The Collaborative's objective was to produce an agreement that would mandate specific reforms in police procedures and insure police accountability by establishing, for instance, a citizens' complaint-review panel with subpoena and investigative authority.

Notwithstanding the good will implicit in the Collaborative, there were ominous countercurrents. Street cops, it appeared, had begun a passive-aggressive job slowdown; arrest rates dropped by fifty per cent even as serious-crime rates rose alarmingly in Over-the-Rhine and other predominantly black neighborhoods. In the three months after the Thomas killing, there were fifty-nine shooting incidents with seventy-seven victims, compared with nine shootings and eleven victims during the same period the previous year. All but one of the victims were black. The then head of the police union, Keith Fangman, told the *Times* that officers were "afraid to take enforcement action in black neighborhoods. . . . It's not a physical fear. They are simply hesitant for fear of being labeled a racist, especially if it's a white officer." In other interviews, Fangman emphasized the mitigating circumstances in the deaths of the thirteen black people other than Thomas and Owensby killed by the Cincinnati police. Almost all had been armed; one was an axe-wielding man who had just decapitated a teenager; one had robbed a bank and shot at a teller; another was a driver who dragged a police officer to his death. And, of the last fourteen Cincinnati police officers killed, twelve had been shot by black men. For the time being, however, the police were not winning the public-relations battle. Obviously, black Cincinnatians wanted evenhanded law enforcement, not a dearth of law enforcement. Expressing a virtually unanimous sentiment, Fangman said, "The aftermath of the riots has actually been more harmful to the city than the riots themselves."

By midsummer, an alliance of African-American religious groups and activist organizations called for an economic boycott of Cincinnati, urging conventions, tourists, and popular entertainers to stay away. Without a scorecard, it was a challenge to keep straight the groups promoting the boycott. One was the Reverend Lynch's Black United Front, and another was the Coalition for a Just Cincinnati, not to be confused with the Coalition of Concerned Citizens for Justice. The boycott advocates had long lists of demands. Their ostensible goals, however, often seemed secondary to the business of jockeying for power or legitimacy in a "community" where the most prevalent attitude toward the boycott has been ambivalence.

For several months, the boycott effort didn't seem to have much impact—September 11th pushed it into the background—but the momentum shifted after a succession of events last fall. First, Stephen Roach, who had been indicted by a Hamilton County grand jury on misdemeanor charges of negligent homicide and obstructing official business, was found not guilty after a nonjury trial. Then the officers indicted in connection with Owensby's death were acquitted of misdemeanor assault charges and a mistrial was declared in the only felony case, an involuntary-manslaughter charge. Because the jury had been hung, ten to two, leaning toward acquittal, the county prosecutor announced that he wouldn't retry the case. The Black United Front's reaction was an open letter addressed to "Dear Friends of Justice." The letter reiterated the call for an economic boycott, on the ground that Cincinnati's blacks were "struggling through the highest state of apartheid." It continued, "Police are killing, raping, planting false evidence, and along with the prosecutor and courts are destroying the general sense of self-respect for black citizens." Shortly after the letter became public, Mayor Luken fired the Reverend Lynch from the co-chairmanship of the task force on race relations.



Earlier this year, the boycotters began registering tangible victories. Bill Cosby cancelled two appearances at a downtown performing-arts center, Whoopi Goldberg backed out of a lecture series, and Wynton Marsalis, Smokey Robinson, the Temptations, and the O'Jays decided not to honor concert dates. The Progressive National Baptist Convention elected to hold its annual ten-thousand-member gathering elsewhere, as did the Organization of Black Airline Pilots. The most telling measure of the boycott organizers' effectiveness occurred in February, when Mayor Luken referred to them as "economic terrorists."

Today, the widely shared perception is that the boycott isn't going to end any time soon because the realistic means to end it don't exist. The various groups who support the boycott don't have identical demands, and many demands are too broad or unwieldy to lend themselves to swift solutions by local government (improve access to health care for low-income people; create jobs targeted to populations with the highest levels of unemployment). There are, as well, several demands—remove the police chief, Thomas Streicher; grant amnesty to all people arrested and jailed for riot-related crimes—which the boycott leaders know that the city leadership won't agree to. Since the boycott began, opinions about its tactical wisdom have been sharply divided, not least among the black population. One casualty, for example, is this summer's edition of a three-day jazz festival that has been an annual event since 1962. In peak years, the festival attracted thirty-five thousand ticket buyers per night to a stadium along the Ohio River and generated $27 million in revenues. The concertgoers have tended to be black, as have the employees and owners of many service and concession businesses that depend upon the festival. When occupancy rates in downtown hotels plummet because convention traffic evaporates, or when restaurant volume declines because tourists stop coming, an inordinate percentage of the workers who lose income or jobs are black. When I mentioned to the Reverend Lynch the plight of an African-American business owner I'd heard about whose limousine company normally employed thirty drivers during the jazz festival, he said, "To miss singing and dancing for a larger cause, I think he would understand that."

There's also the view that a major psychological obstacle to ending the boycott is Cincinnati's odd penchant for self-subversion. (A slightly more generous interpretation might be that the city is afflicted with an urban variety of multiple-personality disorder.) Construction has begun on a new museum devoted to the city's history as a nexus of the Underground Railway, and no one will be surprised if, at some point, boycotters set up a picket line and carry signs referring to—this is one of their favorite rhetorical tropes—Cincinnati's designation as "the eighth most segregated city in America."

At other times, in other ways, conservative impulses have thwarted social and economic progress. For instance, in the early nineteenth century, Cincinnati was the nation's leading cultural and mercantile outpost beyond the Alleghenies; but by mid-century the city fathers, prosperous and satisfied stewards of an economy tied to steamboat transportation, resisted the imperative to adapt to a railroad-based system. (One consequence was that this hastened the meatpacking industry's shift from Cincinnati to Chicago.) More recently, that self-subverting conservatism has manifested itself as a cavalier disregard for the rights of individuals. Cincinnati is where the pornographer Larry Flynt was prevented from selling his magazine *Hustler* for more than twenty years. In 1990, the same bluestocking lawman who had hounded Flynt invaded the Contemporary Arts Center, where an exhibition of Robert Mapplethorpe's photographs, including several homoerotic images, was on display, and arrested the museum director for pandering obscenity. In 1992, the city's leading gay-rights organization, Stonewall Cincinnati, lobbied the City Council to pass a human-rights ordinance that included protection against discrimination on the basis of, among other factors, H.I.V. status, sexual orientation, or "Appalachian regional origin." The following year, this progressive piece of legislation was obliterated when, by a two-to-one margin, voters approved a charter revision (Article 12) that specifically prohibited the city from enforcing the human-rights ordinance on behalf of gays and bisexuals and forbade the council to pass any future gay-rights legislation.

Today, the collateral damage of Cincinnati's racial strife includes, curiously, a deep schism within the gay community. Veterans of the fight against Article 12 recall that, though the organizers and financial backers of the charter revision were ultra-conservative whites, the campaign's most prominent public face was a black Baptist preacher named K. Z. Smith. The ingenious divide-and-conquer slogan of the Article 12 proponents was "Equal Rights, Not Special Rights," and one frequently aired television advertising spot featured the Reverend Smith's wife saying, "Some people say that homosexual behavior is the same as being black. Does anyone really believe that? This makes no sense to me. We need to stop this in Cincinnati. I'm voting 'Yes.' " Another unabashed supporter of Article 12 was the Reverend Lynch.

In the current situation, a bit of amnesia, it seems, has proved useful to Stonewall Cincinnati's board of directors, a new slate that was elected late last summer (to be precise, on the evening of September 11th). This winter, the board issued a qualified endorsement of the boycott, accompanied by a rather tortured explanatory statement. "Stonewall will stand in solidarity with all groups in search of economic and social justice," the statement said, "whatever the cost." One cost has been the philosophical and fiscal alienation of Stonewall's traditional core constituency, gay white men. Scott Knox, an attorney who served on the Stonewall board for six years and is active in a group called Citizens to Restore Fairness, which is trying to reverse Article 12, told me, "There are a lot of well-intentioned people on Stonewall's board who have no sense of history. Their actions tell me that they don't have a good sense of what's politically savvy. We've been building bridges with the business community and politicians to try to get rid of Article 12. How can we accomplish that if the leading gay-rights organization endorses a boycott that punishes the city and its businesses? The perfect boycott was the Montgomery bus boycott, where you were boycotting the company you wanted to change. The precipitating event here was the Timothy Thomas shooting. And the answer is to boycott hotels?"

There was a brief respite in mid-April, when, the Collaborative having produced a fourteen-page blueprint for police reforms, John Ashcroft went to Cincinnati for a ceremonial signing of a five-year agreement between the Department of Justice and the police department. "This is a truly historic day for all law enforcement in America," the Attorney General proclaimed. "This agreement represents the best opportunity for the city of Cincinnati, its residents, and its police department to move forward." Also present for the occasion was the Reverend Lynch, who posed for photographers with Ashcroft and Mayor Luken and said, "The hard work has ended and the harder work begins." Though the Reverend Lynch refrained from making any reference to the boycott, his subsequent utterances made it clear that only a fraction of the demands had been satisfied.

One public figure in Cincinnati who has declined to express an opinion of the boycott is Angela Leisure. In the year since her son's death, Leisure has become lionized as a spokesperson for nonviolence. "My public role now is a peacemaker," she told me. "I walk around Over-the-Rhine and speak to people on the street. I'm constantly urging them to remain calm, be peaceful. I don't want another rebellion. There's a lot of angry people. I speak in churches, community centers, high schools, on the radio. I'm very adamant because I want to keep the peace here in Cincinnati, because we have to live together."

To anyone who expresses an interest, she's also eager, naturally, to gild the memory of her son. "Tim wasn't dislikable," she said. "He had a magnetic personality. He was six-four, two hundred twenty pounds. You could see him in a crowd and, the way he carried himself, there was nothing intimidating about him. He could meet you and, an hour later, introduce you to someone else as his friend. Everybody he met was a friend."

Except, I thought, maybe not Officer Roach. But that wasn't really a fair example. After all, things happened awfully quickly that night in the alley. Officer Roach ran in, saw Thomas, and shot him, all in less than four seconds. They never did have a chance to get to know each other. ♦

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SHOUTS & MURMURS

ALL I REALLY NEED TO KNOW I LEARNED BY HAVING MY ARMS RIPPED OFF BY A POLAR BEAR

BY ANDREW BARLOW

For me, wisdom came not at the top of the graduate-school mountain nor buried in the Sunday-school sandpile. For me, wisdom arrived during a visit to the home of our trusted friend the polar bear. Actually, I suppose "trusted friend" is something of a misnomer, because last year I had my arms brutally ripped from my torso by a fifteen-hundred-pound Norwegian polar bear. How and why this happened is an interesting story. For now, though, let's take a look at some fun lessons about our good friend *Ursus maritimus*, the polar bear. Here's what I learned:

—Share everything. You might be thinking, Really? Even with polar bears? Yes, share especially with polar bears. Actually, the word "share" does not exist in a polar bear's vocabulary, which consists of only about three hundred words. Give everything you have to a polar bear and do not expect him to share it. It did not occur to the polar bear who took my arms from me to share them in any way afterward.

—Polar bears are meticulous about personal cleanliness. A typical polar bear will feast for about twenty to thirty minutes, then leave to wash off in the ocean or an available pool of water. The polar bear who feasted on my arms did exactly this, leaving to scrub up in a nearby lake. Good hygiene is fundamental.

—In nearly all instances where a human has been attacked by a polar bear, the animal has been undernourished or was provoked. In my case, the bear was plump but deranged. Consequently, my attacker bear was spared the execution that typically follows an assault. My proposal—that my polar bear have his arms ripped off by a larger polar bear—was rejected by the authorities. No lesson here, I guess.

—The town of Churchill, Manitoba, is known as the "Polar Bear Capital of the World." According to legend, when a bear ambled into the Royal Canadian Legion hall in Churchill, in 1894, the club steward shouted, "You're not a member! Get out!," and the bear did. This story is almost certainly fictitious. During the first ten minutes that a polar bear was removing my arms from my body, I repeatedly shouted, "Stop!," "Get away from me!," and "Please—oh, my God, this polar bear is going to rip my arms off!," but the animal was unfazed. The lesson in this is that you can't believe everything you hear.

—Beware of blame-shifting. The authorities speculated that the nasty scene may have begun when I grabbed onto the polar bear's fur. At first, I thought, Gee, maybe that's right—I must have done something to get him so sore. But now I reject this suggestion. Why would I grab his fur?

—Things change. As a child, I used to delight in early-morning "polar-bear swims" at my summer camp. Now I don't even feel like swimming anymore, because I have no arms.

—Summing up: 1. Do not run from a polar bear. 2. Do not fight back. 3. Don't just stand there. Whatever you do, it will teach you a lesson.

—Never judge a book by its cover. Polar bears hate this.

—When a male polar bear and a human are face to face, there occurs a brief kind of magic: an intense, visceral connection between man and beast whose poignancy and import cannot be expressed in mere words. Then he rips your arms off. ♦

THE SPORTING SCENE

A MAN-CHILD IN LOTUSLAND

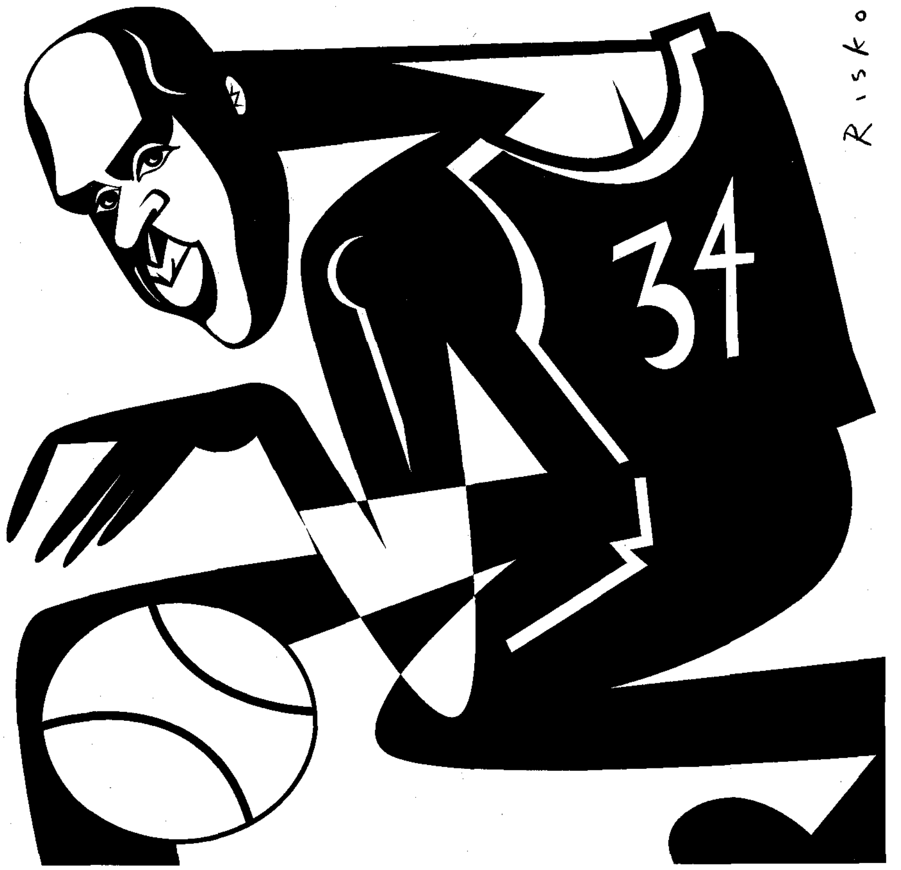
Inside the big world of Shaquille O'Neal.

BY REBECCA MEAD

Shaquille O'Neal, the Los Angeles Lakers center, lives, during the basketball season, in a large cream-colored mansion at the end of a leafy cul-de-sac in Beverly Hills. The exterior of O'Neal's house is discreetly opulent, and it is not until you approach the double front doors that you notice, etched in the glass, two large Superman symbols. The first superhero that O'Neal ever felt an affinity with was the Incredible Hulk, because, as he told me recently, "he was big and green." The young O'Neal knew what it was to be a physical oddity; when he was five years old, his mother was obliged to carry her son's birth certificate with her around their home town of Newark, New Jersey, to prove to bus drivers that he was not eight or nine. Somewhere around the age of seven, O'Neal switched over to Superman, and now, at the age of thirty, his allegiance is steady.

Today, O'Neal, who is seven feet one, has a Superman "S" tattooed on his left biceps, and when he slams the ball into the basket with a particularly incontrovertible defiance at the Staples Center, the Lakers' home court, the Superman theme is played over the loudspeakers. The Superman logo is engraved in the headlights of his silver Mercedes, one of about fifteen cars and trucks he owns. More than five hundred framed Superman comic-book covers hang on the wall of a corridor in his off-season house, in Orlando, where he also has a vintage Superman pinball machine. For a while, he had a Superman bedspread on his bed. O'Neal considers it lucky that he shares a first initial with Superman. "The only reason I call myself Superman is that it starts with 'S,' " he says. "If my name was Tim, I couldn't be Superman. It wouldn't look right."

One of O'Neal's grandmothers died recently, and at her funeral he contemplated the design of his own final resting place. "I started to think about what my mausoleum would look like, and I thought it should be all marble, with Superman logos everywhere," he told me. "There would be stadium seating, and only my family would have the key, and they would be able to go in there and sit down, like in a little apartment. My grave would be right there, and there would be a TV showing, like, an hour-long video of who I was."



O'Neal says that he has a dual nature, "kind of like Clark Kent and Superman."

ROBERT RISKO

O'Neal considers himself to have a dual nature. "Shaquille is corporate, nice-looking, soft-spoken, wears suits, and is very cordial to people, whereas Shaq is the dominant athlete who is the two-time champion," he told me. "They are the same person, but it's kind of like Clark Kent and Superman. During the day, I am Shaquille, and at night I am Shaq." O'Neal also has a nemesis, an evil twin, whom he calls Elliuqahs Laeno. "That's my name spelled backward," he said. "That's the person that I am not allowed to be because of my status. He does what a normal young rich guy would do—party, hang out, use bad language. He stays out all night, tries to practice the next day, isn't focussed. That is him. He's dead, though. I killed him off."

We were talking in a back office at the Lakers' training facility, in El Segundo, a suburb of Los Angeles, after O'Neal had come off the court from an afternoon practice. His skin was tide-marked with drying sweat, and he sat with his legs spread wide, like those riders on the New York subway who laugh in the face of the one-man-one-seat convention. O'Neal, who weighs somewhere around three hundred and forty pounds, would need at least three seats, and perhaps four. His identification with Superman is based on his sense of himself as a crusading force for good—good being, for the moment, the continued success of the Los Angeles Lakers, who are currently in the N.B.A. playoffs—but it is also grounded in a sense of physical supremacy.

O'Neal is one of the largest men alive. He wears size-22 basketball shoes, which are made for him by a company called Starter; they are all white and finished with a shiny gloss, reminiscent, in their sheen and size, of the hull of a luxury yacht. (When the Lakers' equipment manager, a rotund man in the mid-five-foot range named Rudy Garciduenas, carries the shoes into the locker room before a game, he cradles them in gentle arms, as if he were the nursemaid of Otus and Ephialtes, the twin giant sons of Poseidon.) O'Neal's cars must have their interiors ripped out and their seats moved back ten inches before he is able to drive them. (His most recent acquisition is a Ferrari Spider convertible, a birthday gift from his father that was, as he pointed out to reporters in the Lakers' locker room one night, bought with his own earnings. O'Neal's Spider has its top down permanently, since he's too big for the convertible to convert.) O'Neal's pants have an outside seam of four feet six and a half inches. He has never encountered a hotel-room showerhead that was high enough for him to stand under, an inconvenience for a man who spends months at a time on the road. When he speaks on a cell phone, he holds it in front of his mouth and talks into it as if it were a walkie-talkie, and then swivels it up to his ear to listen, as if the phone were a tiny planet making a quarter orbit around the sun of his enormous head.

O'Neal isn't the tallest player in the N.B.A.—that's Shawn Bradley, of the Dallas Mavericks, who is seven feet six—and many teams have at least one seven-footer. But Shawn Bradley is seventy-odd pounds lighter than O'Neal, and when they are on the court together it looks as if Bradley would be well advised to abandon basketball and return to his former calling, as a Mormon missionary. O'Neal is daunting even to the most accomplished of seven-footers, like Dikembe Mutombo, of the Philadelphia 76ers, who is an inch taller than O'Neal but, at two hundred and sixty-five pounds, a bantamweight by comparison. When the 76ers met the Lakers in last year's N.B.A. Finals, Mutombo and O'Neal clashed repeatedly under the boards, with Mutombo bouncing off O'Neal's body—the hulking, barging shoulder, the prodigious posterior backing into implacable reverse.

Many centers move like articulated trucks on a highway filled with Mercedes SLs—they can't weave from lane to lane or make sharp turns or suddenly accelerate. But O'Neal's physical power is augmented by an unlikely agility: he is able to jump and loft his massive body above the rim, and his recovery when he hits the ground is such that should he miss the basket on the first try he can go up again, just as high and just as quickly, grab the ball, feint to fool the three defenders leaping around him, and hit his mark. On the official play-by-play reports that are given to reporters covering the game, O'Neal's performance is condensed into a code: "MISS O'Neal Lay-up/O'Neal REBOUND/MISS O'Neal Lay-up/O'Neal REBOUND/ O'Neal Slam Dunk"—all happening within the space of seven seconds. O'Neal was the second-best scorer in the league this season, with 27.2 points per game, after Philadelphia's Allen Iverson, who scored an average of 31.4. And he has been the N.B.A. Finals' Most Valuable Player for the past two years.

O'Neal's body isn't as cut as he'd like it to be, and friends say that what he really wants is a six-pack stomach, but he takes pride in his solid muscularity. At one point while we were talking, he rose from his chair, hoisted up his yellow No. 34 jersey, and invited me to pinch his fat. A brief investigation revealed that there wasn't any fat to pinch—though there was an acreage of belly, tattooed just above the navel with "LIL Warrior"; and, glinting on the higher reaches of his torso, a gold bar piercing a nipple. "Sixteen per cent body fat, baby," O'Neal said.

It is perhaps inevitable that O'Neal is routinely described as having a huge personality, although his personality is probably the most ordinary-sized thing about him. Even when he is silent in the presence of reporters, which he often is, or when his public comments are restricted to mumbles, his importance on the court means that his pronouncements are invested with extra significance. When O'Neal does talk to reporters, after a game, they swarm around him, pointing miniature tape recorders

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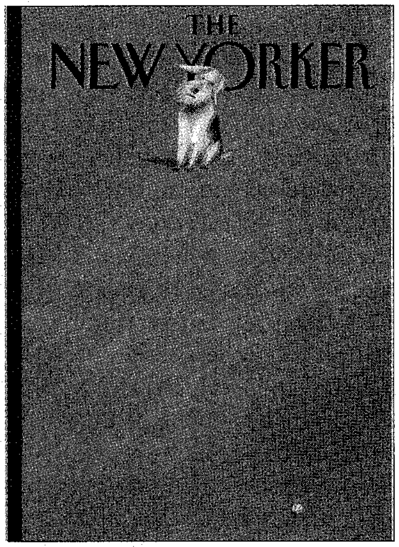
by Mark Ulriksen



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up over their heads, toward his mouth. His voice can be so low that you don't know what he's said until you bring the tape recorder back down to earth and play the tape.

O'Neal's on-court persona is ferocious, and his comments about his opponents are usually of the standard aggressive-athlete variety. "They ought to make those lazy-ass millionaires play some defense," he told me one day. O'Neal aspires to a career in law enforcement after he retires from basketball, and his profile as a player is that of a crushing, point-scoring bad cop, with no good cops in sight. "He likes to enforce things," Herb More, one of O'Neal's high-school coaches, says. But his disposition is fundamentally sunny, and if his sense of humor runs to the excruciatingly broad—he derives great pleasure from picking up a defenseless member of the Lakers' staff, or a reporter, and manhandling him like a burly father with a squealing three-year-old—it is deeply felt.

These characteristics, along with his enthusiastic if less than triumphant excursions into the territories of rap music and movie acting, have made him a central figure in the popular culture. His affability is currently being harnessed to promote Burger King, Nestlé Crunch, and Swatch; and his endorsements have been estimated to earn him between eight and ten million dollars a year. He offers a combination of cartoonish playfulness and wholesome values. He has never taken drugs, unless you count a brief dalliance with creatine and androstenedione, the legal bodybuilding supplements. He never drinks in public, unless it's a soda he's endorsing. He is well known for his rapport with children, and he does a lot of charity work with them. Every Christmas, he dresses up in a Santa suit and hands out gifts in an event known as Shaq-A-Claus, and he has granted twelve wishes through the Make-A-Wish Foundation over the past two years. He's not the kind of player you'd expect to see slapped with a paternity suit. (O'Neal has four children: two with his girlfriend of three years, Shaunie Nelson, one daughter from a previous relationship, and a son of Shaunie's whom O'Neal considers his own.) Nor is he likely to participate in any of those activities that advertisers most fear, and be charged with D.U.I., like Rod Strickland, who plays for the Miami Heat, or, like the former New Jersey Net Jayson Williams, have a chauffeur found shot to death in his bedroom.

O'Neal has had some misadventures in marketing, largely because he and his former agent Leonard Armato tried in the late nineties to sell Shaq as an independent brand, something that had never been done by a basketball player. They launched an online clothing-and-shoe company, Dunk.net, which never took off and went bust after the dot-com crash; another clothing line, called TWIsM.—"The world is mine," O'Neal's personal motto—was similarly unsuccessful. O'Neal and Armato parted ways last year, and O'Neal replaced him with Perry Rogers, a sports marketer who built his career on selling Andre Agassi; Mike Parris, O'Neal's uncle and a former cop, has become O'Neal's manager. "Shaq is a brand, and we are trying to match him up with companies that match his personality and calibre as an athlete," Parris explained to me. (This realignment has yet to be entirely accomplished—O'Neal has until recently been associated with a health-club company called ZNetix, whose founder was accused of bilking investors of millions of dollars.)

"It's still the red-carpet treatment, even if it's only remnants."

Apart from Michael Jordan, who has made more than four hundred and twenty-five million dollars from the likes of Nike and Gatorade during the course of his career, the only other player whose advertising deals rival O'Neal's is Kobe Bryant, his Lakers teammate. Unlike some Lakers before him, such as Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, O'Neal thoroughly enjoys being a celebrity. He considers it his duty to present a friendly face in public, even on occasions when he would prefer not to be badgered by autograph hunters, and he accepts the inevitability of being recognized. O'Neal was startled to discover, after being stranded on September 11th in Baton Rouge for several days, that he was expected to show ID when boarding the charter plane he'd hired. "I'm not prejudiced, but those pilots had better have some ID," he told a friend.

O'Neal's public persona could not be more different from that of Jordan, who was the dominant force in basketball throughout most of the late eighties and the nineties, and is still the world's best-known athlete. Jordan, like the style of basketball he perfected, was transcendent. His athleticism resembled aeronautics, and he regularly evoked celestial comparisons: Larry Bird once described him as "God disguised as Michael Jordan." O'Neal, by contrast, is solidly earthbound. (On the court, Kobe Bryant is Ariel to O'Neal's Caliban.) Michael Jordan was a wise adult figure who invited aspiration: the elegant Nike commercials that urged fans to Be Like Mike encouraged an identification with his prowess, even as they celebrated his superlative capacities.

Being Like Shaq is demonstrably impossible, and more or less unimaginable. Instead, O'Neal, with his taste for souped-up cars, and his appetite for dumb jokes, and his tendency toward braggadocio, looks like a regular American guy, albeit a drastically oversized one. Shaq appears to want to Be Like Us.

The growth of professional basketball over the past twenty-odd years from a relatively minor spectator sport to a mass-cultural phenomenon is an example of the way in which all of American culture is increasingly geared to the tastes of teen-age boys. Marketers hold that adolescent boys, with their swiftly changing appetites and their enormous buying power, are the most difficult and most critical consumers to reach. Basketball is a perfect game for teen-agers: it's fast, it's energetic, it requires little equipment, and it can be practiced in driveways and on the playground without so much as an opponent; and it has been appropriated by products that have nothing to do with sports—Coke, milk—as an excellent way to reach that desired demographic. Teen boys function, in turn, as cultural emissaries to the global population: Nikes aren't cool all over the world because Vince Carter wears them but because cool American teen-agers wear them.

Basketball itself is marketed with teen tastes in mind. The theatre of a Lakers game has an adolescent-boy aesthetic: goofy and overheated. There are the whirling spotlights when the players emerge from the locker room, high-fiving; the snippets of roaring rap music and of the teen-boy anthem "We Will Rock You," by Queen; the absurd contests held between quarters, in which competitors do things like play musical chairs on a set of huge inflatable seats. Should all this hilarity be inadequate to the task of holding a young man's interest, there is always the Laker Girls.

The prevalence of teen-boy tastes in American culture is something that suits Shaquille O'Neal, since those are also his tastes. There are, of course, certain adult dimensions to his life. He talks of marrying Shaunie—she wears a big diamond engagement ring—although he says he's not quite ready yet. And he speaks often of his responsibilities and the fact that he doesn't go clubbing the way he used to. "When I was by myself, the only people I had to take care of were my parents," he says. "But then I had my first child and I had to slow down; and now I've got four." But in many ways his life style is a thirteen-year-old's fantasy existence. O'Neal has surrounded himself with cousins from Newark and old friends from high school, who share his interests in goofing off, breaking stuff, making noise, shooting guns, and driving a wide range of motorized vehicles, which include customized Harley-Davidsons and, on the lake at his house in Orlando, a fleet of Jet Skis.

O'Neal has installed one of his high-school buddies, Joe Cavallero, to look after the Orlando house, which also appears to mean wreaking measured destruction. "We have food fights, where Thomas, the chef, will come in from the grocery store with all these things, and Shaquille will break a whole watermelon over my head, and I'll hit him with a pudding cake," Cavallero told me. "Shaquille doesn't really have many books, but he has got a big video collection: the whole Little Rascals series, and every kung-fu thing you can think of, and sometimes we play-fight like that, too. And every night he'll get on his d.j. deck and play for a couple of hours, and he'll turn that thing up as loud as it will go, and everything in his house is marble, so it echoes through the whole house. And Shaquille likes to wake me up with a pillow smash to the face. You know how you get to being sound asleep, and someone smashes you in the face with a pillow? It is so funny."

The house in Los Angeles is home not only to Shaunie and the children but to Thomas Gosney, Shaq's chef, factotum, and close friend, whose loyalty is such that he responds to questions about O'Neal in the first-person plural: when I asked Gosney whether O'Neal was ever going to get around to marrying Shaunie, he said, "I think we will, but I think we need to get out of the N.B.A. first." In addition to feeding O'Neal lots of fruit and vegetables and preventing him from indulging his particular culinary vice of eating sandwiches late at night,

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Gosney provides round-the-clock companionship if necessary. "The night before that first championship that we won, O'Neal was up all night," Gosney said. "He was stressing out, and I knew he needed a release. He came in and found me and said, 'Are you sleeping?' So we got up, and we rode go-carts, and then we rode motorcycles. He needed to get up and do these things in the middle of the night." O'Neal depends on his friends not just for entertainment but for home management, and Gosney told me, "Before Shaunie came and lived with us, I would say that I was his wife, except for the sex. Shaquille has said to me, 'If you were a girl, I don't know what I would do.' "

O'Neal's size gives him a storybook quality that also exaggerates the childish aspect of his nature. In myth, giants are primordial creatures, who are often beloved for their lumbering doltishness. O'Neal is much sharper than the typical fairy-tale giant, but the simplicity of his tastes and of his manner of expression has currency in a popular culture where childishness is valued above adult sophistication. "Kids like me because they see themselves in me," he said. "I don't speak with a Harvard-type vocabulary. I only wear suits when I need to. I don't talk about stuff I haven't gone through. I am just me. They like rims; I like rims. They like rap music; I like rap music. They like platinum; I like platinum."

A few years ago, O'Neal took up hunting, and one of his favorite activities is disappearing for the day into a game preserve in Florida with a few friends and a few guns. He is a bit defensive about this hobby. "It's not like I'm just sneaking around and killing animals. I am a law-abiding citizen," he told me. "What I like about it, first, is looking at the animals, and then I like getting the big ones. You can be out there all day, walking around, looking at leaves, looking at grass, looking at footprints." Off the marble entrance hall of O'Neal's house in Beverly Hills, there is a carpeted room, filled with his hunting trophies: mounted heads of antlered creatures cover the walls and, because the walls are filled, cover the floor, too, their noses pointing quirkily up at the high ceiling. There are a few animals that O'Neal bought already stuffed: a polar bear, and a taxidermic tableau of a lion attacking a zebra. The scent of the room is a pungent mixture of the chemical and the irredeemably organic, and the door is usually kept closed, like Bluebeard's bloody chamber.

A few days after O'Neal turned thirty, in March, he threw a party for himself at his house for a couple of hundred friends, family members, and business associates. An archway of red balloons had been set up at the foot of the driveway, which was covered with a red carpet upon which Superman logos were projected in spinning light. The red carpet led into a large tent behind the house, above the tennis court, which was decorated with long tubular balloons in red and yellow and blue, twisted together like something from a medical diagram of the lymphatic system.

Large Superman logos hung from the tent's ceiling, and on either side of a d.j. deck were two telephone booths with Superman logos on them. There were buffet tables piled with food: steaming lobster tails and a pyramid of shrimp; a birthday cake featuring a cardboard image of O'Neal in full Superman attire, swooping up through a basketball hoop. Guests could help themselves to Häagen-Dazs from a refrigerated cart, and order drinks from bars sponsored by Red Bull and E & J cognac. A cigar company had set up a table arrayed with different kinds of cigars, each of them bearing a paper ring printed with the words "Happy 30th Shaq."

O'Neal, who had a cigar clamped in his mouth, wore a gray leather suit with a three-quarter-length jacket. (The suit required a hundred and fifty square feet of leather, the skins of about eighteen lambs.) He greeted his guests—his Lakers teammate Rick Fox and Fox's wife, the actress Vanessa Williams; Ray Lewis, the Baltimore Ravens linebacker; the actor Tom Arnold, who lives across the

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OH EVENINGS

The man standing there, the other stranger,
slips easily into the background
as though stopping were the last thing on his mind.

Another, lacking the courage of his convictions,
went mad from drinking seawater. That was an absolute rout.

Oh evenings! Learning where to look it up
became an end in itself. To this purpose
trained fleas were engaged to do sums.
Ants on their way to happiness paused
over the numbers: Did it seem like three
or was it just three? Is this where I came in?

More likely we all need to be blessed for the hole
in his savage argument. Surely, passing through town,
we contributed a little to the regional economy,
received credit for showing our faces.
So what if the only theatre in town
had been turned into a funeral parlor?
There are few things more theatrical than death,
one supposes, though one doesn't know.

Which brings me to my original argument.
Ah, what was the argument? Keeping our places,
assuming no more credit than what is due
our tame lustre, our positive shine. Then people will go out
into the city, spreading germs, living like it was last year.

—*John Ashbery*

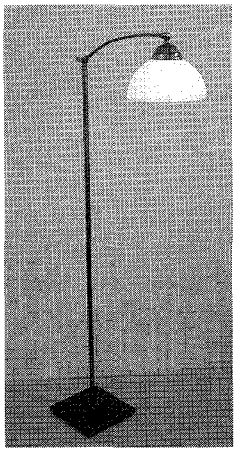
street; the rap musicians Lord Tariq and Peter Gunz; and any number of Shaq service-industry members, including his masseur and the guy who installed the audio and video equipment in his house—with unflagging enthusiasm, hugging the men, bending down low to kiss the women's cheeks. Guests wandered in and out of the house, past the triangular swimming pool on the patio, in which a surfboard decorated with an image of O'Neal's Lakers jersey floated, and into the kitchen, which was filled with gifts that he'd received: sugar cookies, a big toy truck, a box from the Sharper Image. On the walls of the marble hallway leading out of the kitchen, there was bad basketball art—a painting of tall figures leaping around a basket, and another of an athlete's back as he holds a basketball on his shoulders, Atlas-like. There were photographs of O'Neal's children, and a framed clipping from the *Star* bearing the headline "CAUGHT! SHAQ DATING UP A STORM WITH HALLE BERRY."

The living room, which has a view of the San Fernando Valley, is flanked by two fish tanks made from curving glass. The tanks are filled with brightly colored exotic fish, swimming flickeringly, and at one point in the evening O'Neal, coming into the house, found a few guests standing mesmerized in front of the tanks. He went behind a staircase that led off the hallway, where, hidden from view, was a smaller tank, filled with goldfish. He scooped into the goldfish tank with a net and filled a glass with slippery orange bodies. Then he climbed up a stepladder that was set alongside one of the big tanks, lifted its lid, and dumped in the goldfish. The angel fish and clown fish and puffer fish went wild, darting to swallow the flailing goldfish whole. A ruthless-looking barracuda snapped one up, and then went for the rebound and snared another. O'Neal looked extremely satisfied with the whole scene. "I love the sport of hunting," he said.

The host spent most of the night bopping among a crowd of his friends in the middle of the dance floor, head and shoulders and most of a torso above everyone around him. Halfway through the evening, the music was turned down, and O'Neal was summoned to the stage, where he sat in a chair and, along with everyone else, watched a video tribute devoted to the greatness of Shaq. There was O'Neal playing basketball at Louisiana State University, a spindly version of himself, breaking the hoop from the backboard. There was home-video footage of him on a beach, and playing with his kids, and dancing—to one Dr. Dre tune, he dropped to his knees, kicked his legs in the air behind him, and humped the carpet. There were also innumerable shots of him mooning the camera. The final image was of O'Neal, shirtless and sweaty, at the turntables; he unzipped his pants, shifted them gradually down his ample hips, hoisted his underwear up above his waist, and finally turned around and dropped his pants to show the camera his glistening rear. After the show was over, O'Neal stood up, unzipped his fly, zipped it up again, and said, "I never knew I had such a good ass until I saw that film. Damn, I'm sexy."

The reason O'Neal dedicated himself to the pursuit of excellence in basketball, he says, was to impress girls. "I was always the class clown, and always wanted everybody to like me," he told me recently. "Everyone else had a girlfriend, and how come I couldn't have a girlfriend?" We were at the Mondrian Hotel, in Los Angeles, where he was being photographed by ESPN while perched on top of a six-foot-tall flowerpot, a design feature of the hotel's pool area. When we sat down at a table to talk, O'Neal smashed his head against the light fixture hanging overhead. "I had to learn around age fifteen to accept my size," he said. "My father told me, 'You are going to be someone. Just keep playing and you are going to be a football player, a basketball player, or even a baseball player.' Around the age of thirteen, I got my name in the papers for basketball and the girls started liking me, and ever since then it's been nothing but up."

O'Neal gets his height from his mother's side of the family. Lucille O'Neal Harrison is six feet two inches tall, and her grandfather, who was a farmer in Georgia, was about six-ten. O'Neal met his great-grandfather once before he died, and says he is one of the people from history he'd most like to know. The others are Walter Matthau, because of the movie "The Bad News Bears" ("He was a drunk coach who got a bunch of misfit kids together—black kids, Chinese kids, girls—and they



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played baseball and won the championship"), and Redd Foxx, "because I used to watch 'Sanford and Son' all the time, and laughter is the best stress reliever."

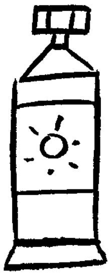
He credits Phil Harrison, his stepfather, actually, with having given him the emotional impetus to succeed in basketball. (Harrison married O'Neal's mother when Shaq was two. His biological father is Joe Toney, who, in 1994, appeared in the *National Enquirer* claiming paternity and thereafter did the talk-show rounds. O'Neal's response was to write a rap song called "Biological Didn't Bother.") Harrison, who was a sergeant in the Army, was a disciplinarian, the kind of father who wouldn't let O'Neal keep trophies in the house for fear that he would become conceited. O'Neal still gives all his trophies to Harrison, and he tends to treat older men with the utmost respect.

O'Neal's earliest years were spent in Newark, but when he was in the sixth grade the family was transferred to an Army base in Wildflecken, Germany. There O'Neal started to play basketball seriously, and though he was not a prodigious talent, he worked hard and was unfeasibly tall. As O'Neal recounts in his autobiography, "Shaq Talks Back," he was scouted by Dale Brown, the coach of L.S.U., who had come to Germany to give a basketball clinic. Brown asked how long the six-foot-nine-inch O'Neal had been in the Army; O'Neal replied that he was just fourteen. By the middle of O'Neal's sophomore year in high school, when he was six-eleven, the family had moved back to the United States, to San Antonio, where he was on his school's basketball team. From San Antonio, O'Neal went to L.S.U., and after three years there he opted for the N.B.A. draft and signed, in 1992, with the Orlando Magic for forty million dollars over seven years, which was then the most lucrative contract in N.B.A. history. O'Neal spent four years in Orlando, long enough to earn a reputation as a weak playoff player and to endure an ugly falling-out with his teammate Penny Hardaway. And yet there was no doubt that he had the potential to be one of the most formidable centers to play the game since Abdul-Jabbar, and even Bill Russell and Wilt Chamberlain. In 1996, Jerry Buss, the owner of the Lakers, and his general manager, Jerry West, lured O'Neal to Los Angeles, at a salary of a hundred and twenty million dollars over seven years—the biggest contract in the game.

By that time, O'Neal had started to make rap records for Jive—for example, "Shaq Diesel," which included songs with titles such as "Shoot Pass Slam" and "(I Know I Got) Skillz"—and had played a genie in the movie "Kazaam," one of a handful of films in which he demonstrated the limitations of his acting ability. He had not, however, helped Orlando win an N.B.A. championship, and critics suggested that his proximity to Hollywood would lead to similar results for the Lakers. But O'Neal's performing career failed to take off; and his game improved when, in 1999, Phil Jackson, the former coach of the Chicago Bulls, took over the job of coaching the Lakers. Under Jackson, O'Neal started to play more of a team game, passing to other players rather than bullying his way to the hoop. In 2000, the team won its first championship since 1988, the era of Magic Johnson and Abdul-Jabbar.

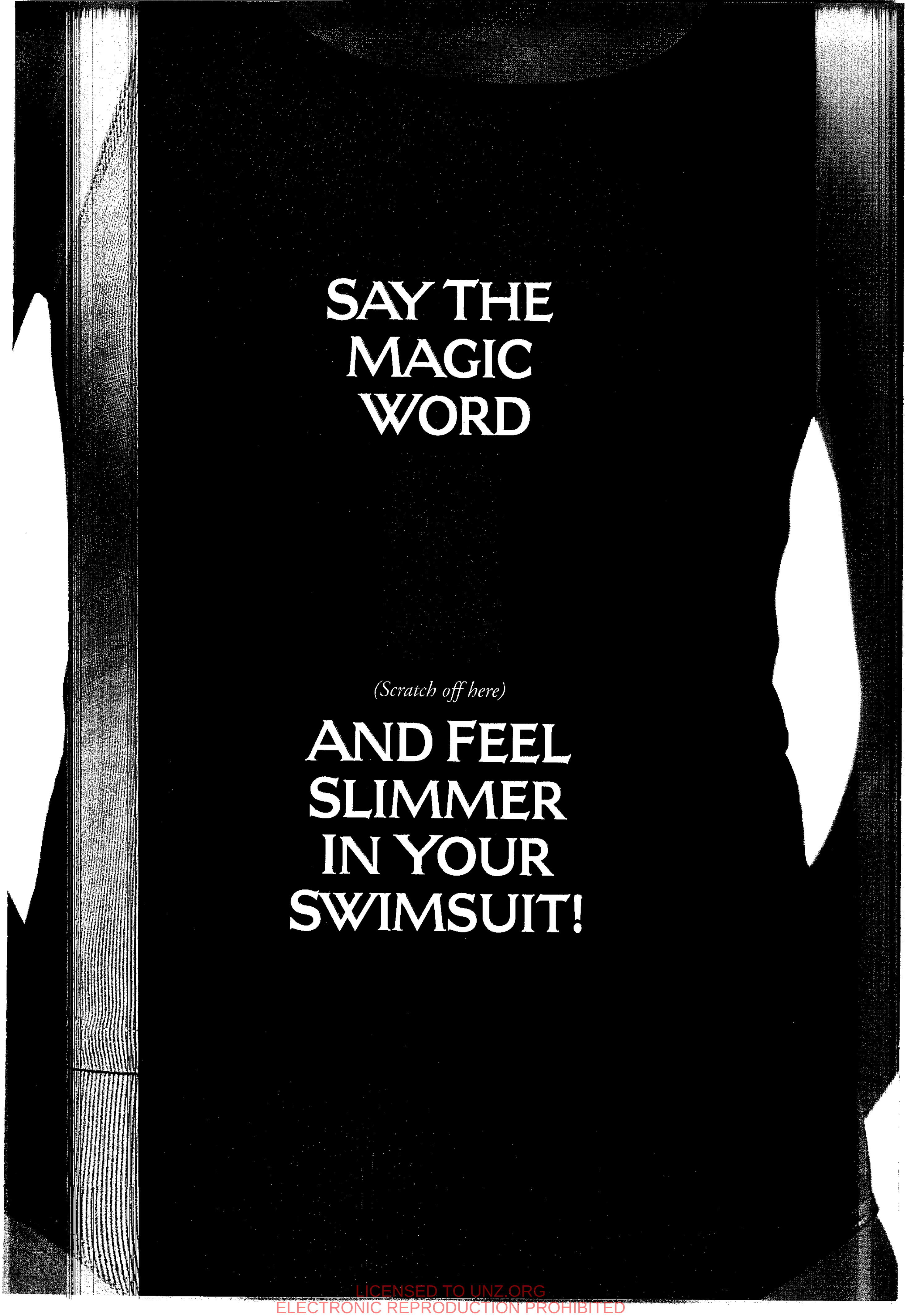
Jackson is well known for applying the principles of Zen to the game of basketball, and O'Neal says that Jackson's methods meshed with his own strategies for victory. "I control my dreams," O'Neal told me. "So-called educated people call it meditation, but I don't. I call it 'dreamful attraction.' The mind controls everything, so you just close your eyes and see yourself dribbling, see yourself shooting." Contrary to some reports, O'Neal says that Jackson has not induced the team to practice yoga. "We tried Tai Chi one year, but the guys didn't like it, because, even though it was stretching, it would make us tight," he said. "Anyway, I don't stretch. I just play."

O'Neal is regularly described as the league's most dominant player: there is no other single player who can match him physically, and there is no defensive strategy that another team can devise which will decisively shut him down. Jerry West told me, "If you could construct a basketball player physically, Shaq would be the model. He has this great size and incredible strength, but on top of that he has unbelievable balance, incredible footwork, and a great sense of where he is on the court." Most dominant isn't synonymous with best, however; the players who usually win that accolade are smaller, faster men like Kobe Bryant or Jason Kidd of the New Jersey Nets. And O'Neal's weaknesses, for all his power, are transparently evident. His free-throw average has been only around fifty per cent for most of his career.



His detractors say that he is dominant only because of his size. Whenever *Slam*, whose readers are the young fans upon whom the game depends, puts O'Neal on the cover, the editors receive letters complaining that Shaq is just big and fat and boring. O'Neal's weight is given in the official statistics about the team as an implausible three hundred and fifteen pounds. (People close to Shaq claim that he sometimes hits three hundred and fifty.) When, in mid-March, I asked O'Neal what he weighed, he told me three hundred and thirty-eight pounds, though he said it in the slightly hesitant tone of a kid asserting that he has done his homework. "I'm just a big-boned guy," he said. "Muscle weighs more than fat, and a big guy has big muscles. People look at me and see this big guy and they think it's fat. How can I be fat and out of shape and do what I do? You could put me up against any athlete in the world, you could put them on a computerized diet, and on a treadmill and all that, and I will bust their ass."

Being called the most dominant rather than the best is fine with O'Neal. "They've changed the game because of me; other organizations whine and cry because of me," he said. "Being the best is too easy for me." His free-throw failings are spurs to his ambition, he says. "If I played the game I play and shot eighty-eight per cent from the line, it would take away from my mental focus, because I would know how good I was and I wouldn't work so hard." (In fact, O'Neal has been making about sixty-five per cent of his free throws during the current playoffs.) "I'm not allowed to be as dominant as I want to be," he told me. "I would probably average fifty points a game, twenty rebounds, and the opponents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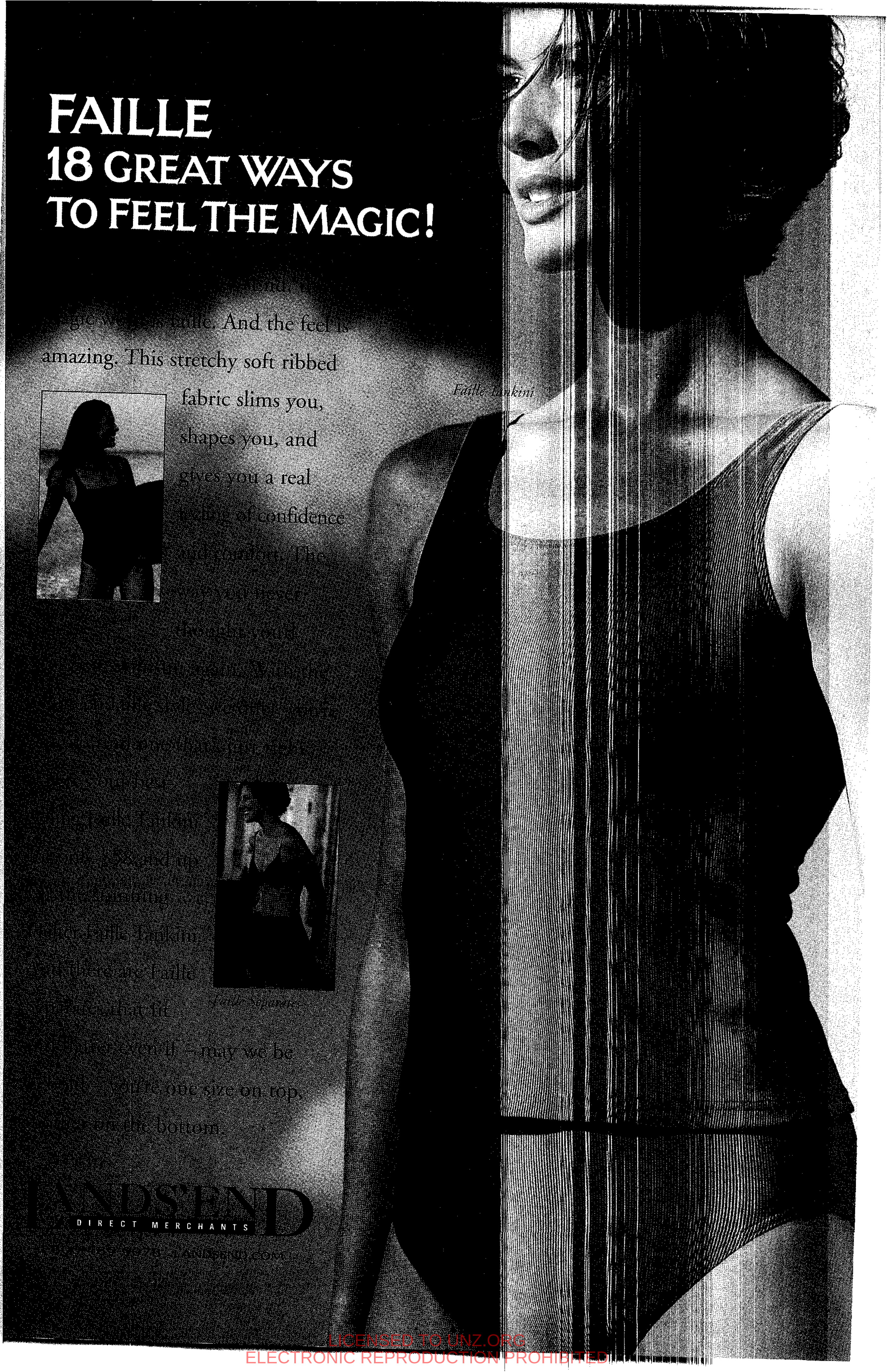
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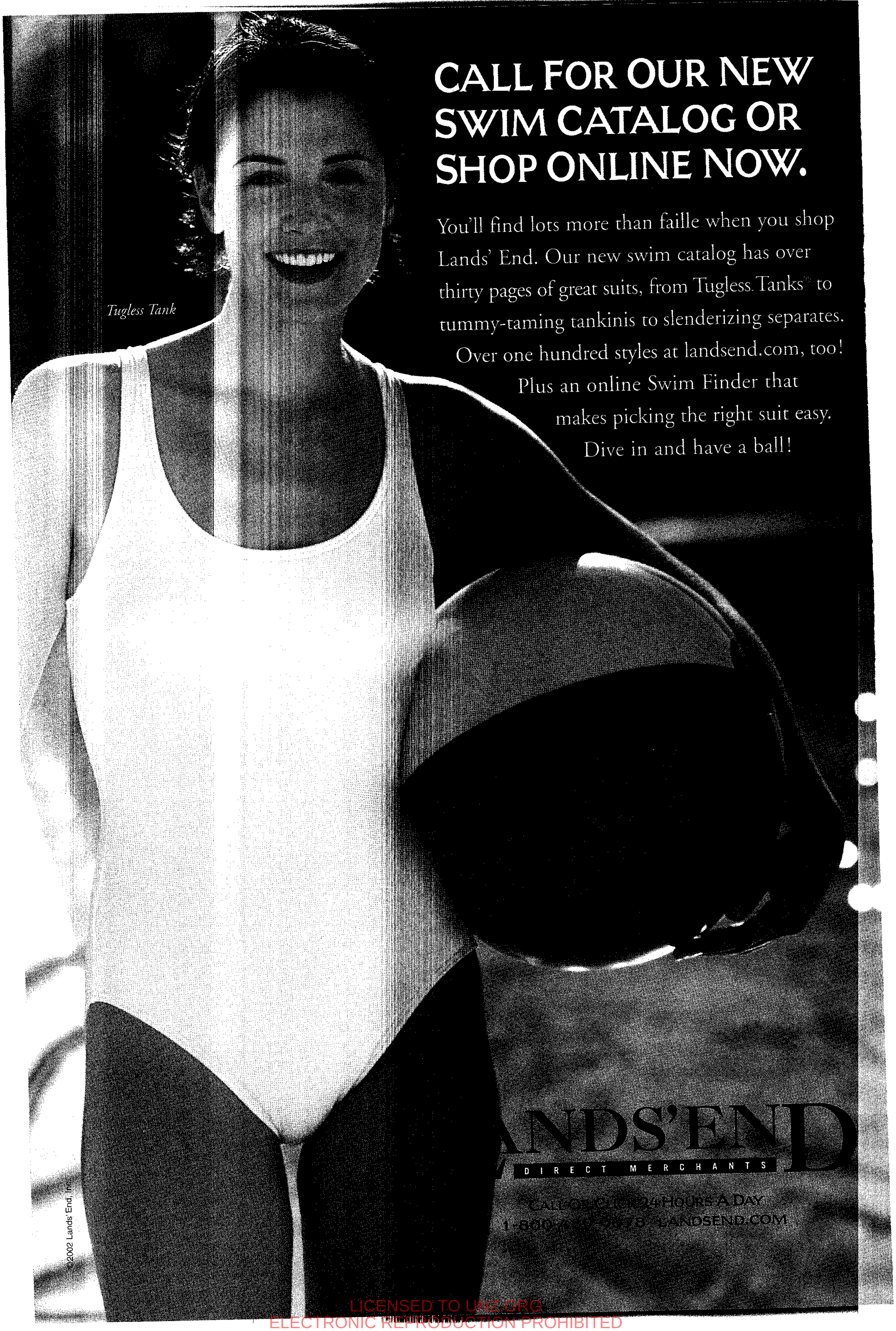

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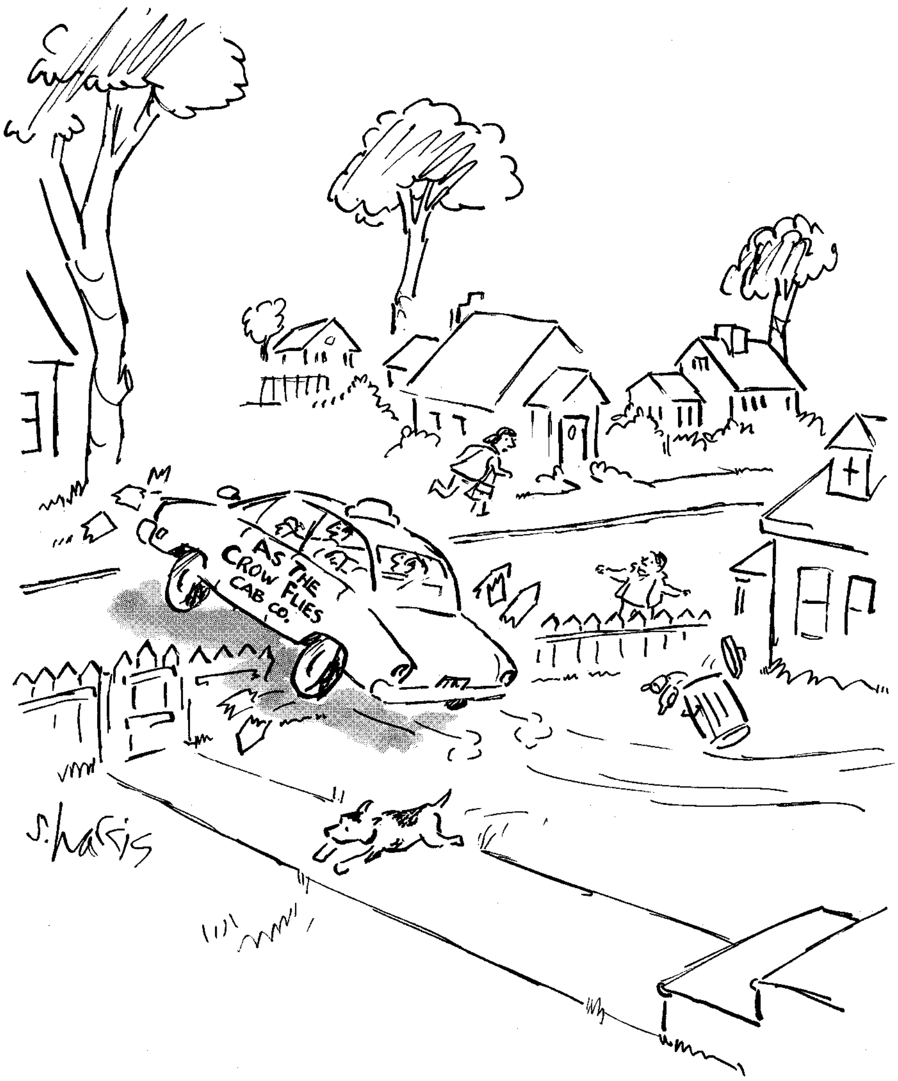
would foul out in the first or second quarter." O'Neal suspects that his game is being reined in by the N.B.A. referees. "I guess they have to keep it even so that the viewers won't get bored," he said. David Stern, the N.B.A. commissioner, recently acknowledged to the Los Angeles *Daily News* that it is difficult to know when to call a foul on Shaq, and said, "We used to get the same calls on Kareem and every other big man that's been as great as Shaq is."

N.B.A. viewing figures are well down since their peak of 6.6 million at the height of Jordan's career. Last year, an average of four million people watched the regular season games on NBC. But a game in which O'Neal plays can sometimes make for dull viewing. His strengths aren't as thrilling to watch as those of a player who flies and leaps, and the defenses used against him slow everything down so much that a viewer's attention can dwindle. The most notorious of these is the Hack-a-Shaq, in which opposing players make repeated fouls on O'Neal by throwing their arms around his waist, hoping to regain possession of the ball at little cost by sending him to the free-throw line. Phil Jackson agrees that O'Neal is expected to play by different rules from everyone else. "It's totally unfair, but the referees have to be," Jackson told me. "Everybody fouls Shaq all the time, because they know the referees can't call every foul that is created against him. There isn't a shot in which he's not fouled except maybe twice a game. There are guys hitting him on the way up, hitting him at the top, knocking him around." O'Neal says, "The beating that I take is like wrestling. It ain't even basketball sometimes. I'm the N.B.A.'s best W.W.F. wrestler, and I'm the W.W.F.'s best N.B.A. player."

O'Neal has a tattoo on his right arm that says "Against the Law," and, since he's famously supportive of the uniformed services, I asked him what he meant by it. "It's against the law to be this talented, this beautiful, this smart, this sexy," he said. "I don't mean penal-code law. I mean laws of nature."


AS THE CROW FLIES CAB CO.
S. Harris

• •

Like a Hollywood movie or a mass-market paperback, every sports season needs a narrative of conflict and resolution, and in the 2000-01 season the story was the rivalry and animosity between O'Neal and Kobe Bryant. The narrative is crafted by the Lakers' beat reporters, who attend around a hundred games a season—hanging out in the locker rooms for their appointed forty-five minutes before the game—and show up at countless closed practice sessions. The structure of team coverage creates what a therapist would diagnose as a cycle of dependency and resentment on the part of the reporters, who are a group of mostly smallish men obliged to wait around grudgingly for a bunch of mostly huge men to stoop and speak to them. The reporters exercise their own power, of course, in making a drama out of the daily shifts in locker-room mood, which in turn earns them the occasional enmity of the players. O'Neal barely talks to the press for weeks at a time, or does what he calls "SHAM-ming them"—giving them the Short Answer Method. "They're yellow journalists," he said to me one day. "Don't focus on whether Shaq is having problems with Phil, or whether Shaq is liking Kobe or not, or what Rick and Vanessa are doing—if we're a great team, say we're a great team. I think they get so bored with us winning all the time, they focus on that other stuff."

But the Shaq-Kobe feud was genuine, and it provided excellent copy. O'Neal and Bryant had never got along. Bryant, who came to the league a polished eighteen-year-old from a wealthy family, seemed to find O'Neal's antic goofiness distasteful; O'Neal thought Bryant was a selfish player who was interested only in demonstrating his own virtuosity and was insufficiently deferential. O'Neal would say ominous things like "If the big dog don't get fed, the house won't get guarded," after nights of what he saw as Kobe hogging the ball, and Kobe would say to reporters, "Turn my game down? I need to turn it up." The whole affair culminated, happily enough for the team and its chroniclers, in a reconciliation sentimental enough for the most golden-hued of Hollywood dramas, with Bryant shucking off his natural aloofness both on and off the court—he started to laugh at teammates' jokes on the bus instead of listening to his Walkman—and with O'Neal referring to the quicksilver Bryant as "my idol." (The saga forms the basis of a new book, "Ain't No Tomorrow: Kobe, Shaq and the Making of a Lakers Dynasty," by Elizabeth Kaye.) This season, Bryant and O'Neal have been coexisting quite chummily. O'Neal took a few shots at Bryant while delivering an impromptu rap to the crowd at his birthday party, castigating him for not showing up ("Kobe, if you hear me, I'm talking about your ass," and so on), but the razzing seemed good-natured.

This season's master narrative has been Shaq vs. Shaq—O'Neal's battle with his own body and its ailments. Chronic pain in an arthritic toe and other injuries that have cropped up have been endlessly inquired after by the beat reporters. "We started out with the small toe on his left foot—that was getting to him early—and at some point in the season we all made the transition to the right big toe," Tim Brown, who covers the team for the Los Angeles *Times*, explained. The paper has been running headlines like "LAKERS' BIG HOPES REST IN SHAQ'S BIG TOE," and reams of newsprint have been devoted to the orthotics that have been devised by O'Neal's podiatrist, Robert Mohr, to alleviate the strain on the big toe. Last week, the papers reported that not only had O'Neal cut his finger while playing against the San Antonio Spurs in the first game of the Western Conference semifinals but he had also required stitches to mend a cut sustained earlier that day at home while he was pretending to be Spider-Man.

This season, O'Neal has thought a lot about the toll the game is taking on his body. "I feel beat up," he told me a few days after his birthday. "I'm probably one of the only guys in history who has taken a pounding night in and night out." He was sitting on a massage bench after a practice session, and he rubbed his arms and slapped his biceps as if he were looking over a recalcitrant piece of machinery. "With the last two championships, afterward I just had to sit down for a week and do nothing, like this"—and he struck a catatonic pose, stiff-limbed and staring into space—"and let all the injuries go away. And then there's another week to do this"—he stretched his thick, muscled arms above his head, exposing the spacious geography of his armpits—"and then, by the time my shit is all gone, we've only got another week until training camp." He was worried, too, about the effects of the anti-inflammatory drugs he was taking. "They are the same drugs they say might have messed up Alonzo Mourning's kidneys," he said, referring to the Miami center who missed most of last season as a result of kidney disease.

Rick Fox, O'Neal's teammate, coming off the court after a practice in New Jersey a few weeks ago, said, "Shaq is dealing with injuries that he never thought he'd have to deal with. This is new to him. Even Superman had his kryptonite, but after ten years there are only so many hits of kryptonite you can take." One day, O'Neal told me, mournfully, "When I was Kobe's age, I could play a magnificent game and stay out all night, but now I am old, and my toe is killing me." O'Neal, whose contract expires in 2006, has started to say that he may have only two more years in the game, though in 1999 he told *Slam* that he thought he might be out by the time he reached thirty.

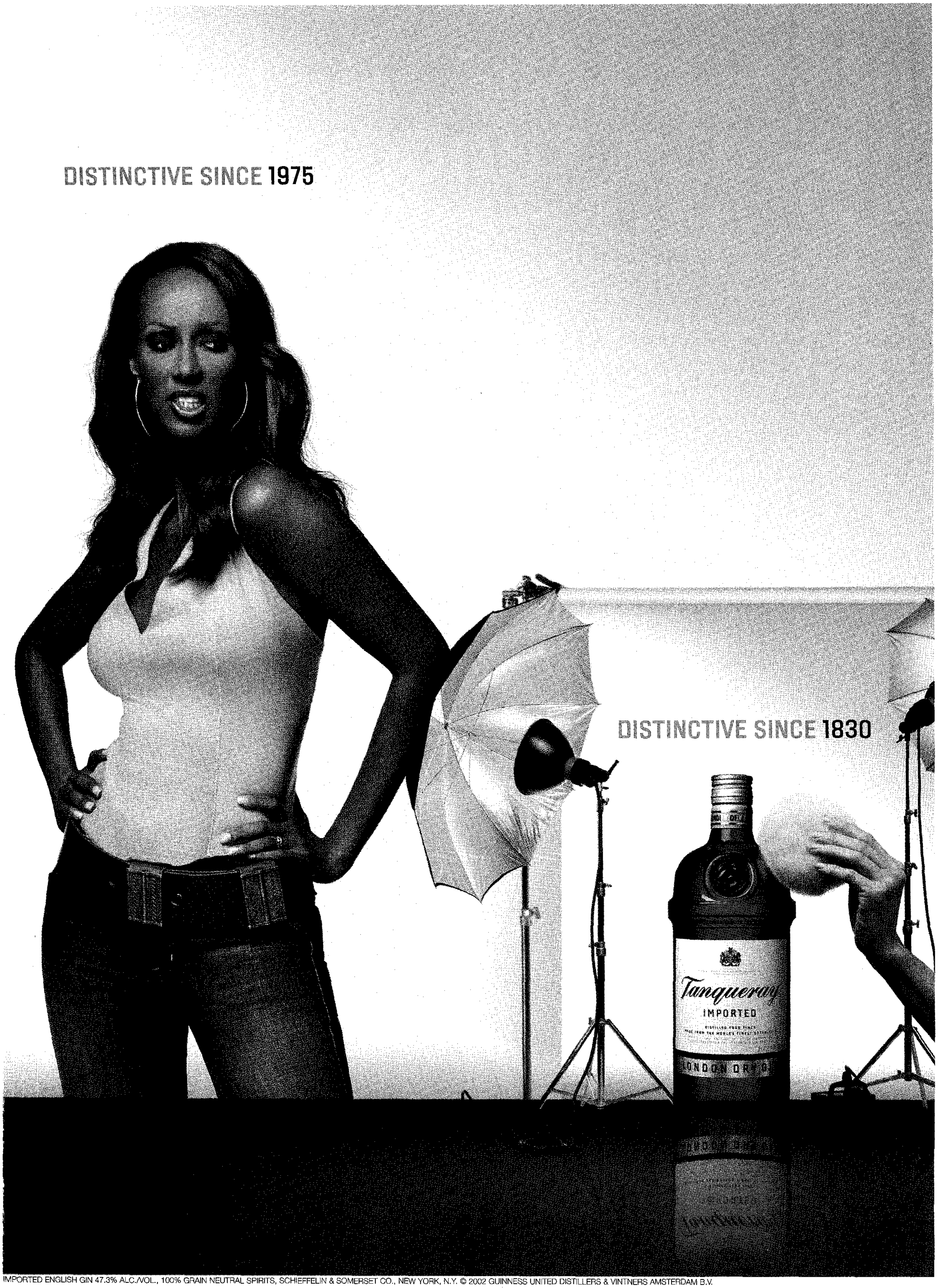
O'Neal will be under pressure to keep playing. Jerry West told me, "If I ever see him retire early, I'll kill him. You play until you can't play. This is a tough guy, and he can play through things that mortal people wouldn't want to." Sometimes O'Neal talks about himself this way, too. Toward the end of this year's regular season, he was out for two games, with a sprained wrist, causing the reporters to shift their focus from foot to arm. The Lakers lost both games, and just before the next game, in which O'Neal was to return, against Miami, I asked him whether he felt responsible for being hurt or whether he felt as if his body were betraying him as well as the team.

He rejected the premise of the question. "I don't get hurt—I get taken out," he said. "My wrist is hurting for a reason—it's not hurting because I fell on it. My stomach is hurting for a reason. My knee is hurting for a reason. I don't get hurt, baby, I get taken out. You can't hurt this"—and, with that, he flexed his left biceps, like a bodybuilder, and, with one huge fist, banged on his Superman tattoo. Then he went out and scored forty points against Miami, leading the Lakers to victory.

In other moods, though, O'Neal admits to his own mortality. "Everything hurts," he told me. "A pinch is a pinch. If you pinch an elephant, it will hurt him. Pain is pain, and pain doesn't care how big you are or how strong you are." One day, he said, "You know who my favorite basketball player is? People might be surprised when they hear this. It's Dave Bing." I said I didn't know who Dave Bing was. "I don't know who he is, either," said O'Neal. "Who did he play for? Detroit? He's retired now, and he owns a big steel factory in Detroit." Bing left the game in 1978, and subsequently became a Hall of Famer, and the winner, in 1984, of the National Minority Small Business Person of the Year and the National Minority Supplier of the Year awards.

O'Neal says he's starting to develop business interests that have nothing to do with basketball: he told me he'd bought a couple of car washes and strip malls, and had just signed a deal for some Burger King franchises. "Basketball is cool, but we can't do it forever. After basketball, Dave Bing is my guy," he said. "Those players who are smart enough save their money, so that after you stop playing you can keep it going—that is what I plan on doing, like the Kennedy money." I asked O'Neal whether he saw himself as Joe Kennedy, a patriarch establishing a dynasty. "No, I'm the one who passed away in a plane crash—what's his name?" he said. "The good-looking one. That's who I am: good-looking, educated."

On those few evenings and afternoons when O'Neal is not playing basketball or filming a commercial or visiting the children's ward of a hospital or otherwise engaging in the various duties of an N.B.A. superstar, he is often in a classroom, studying penal-code law. O'Neal has always been fascinated by the police—both Mike Parris, his business manager, and Jerome Crawford, who serves as his bodyguard, are retired police officers—and some years ago O'Neal decided that he wanted to train as a cop himself, with the intention of pursuing a law-enforcement career after he leaves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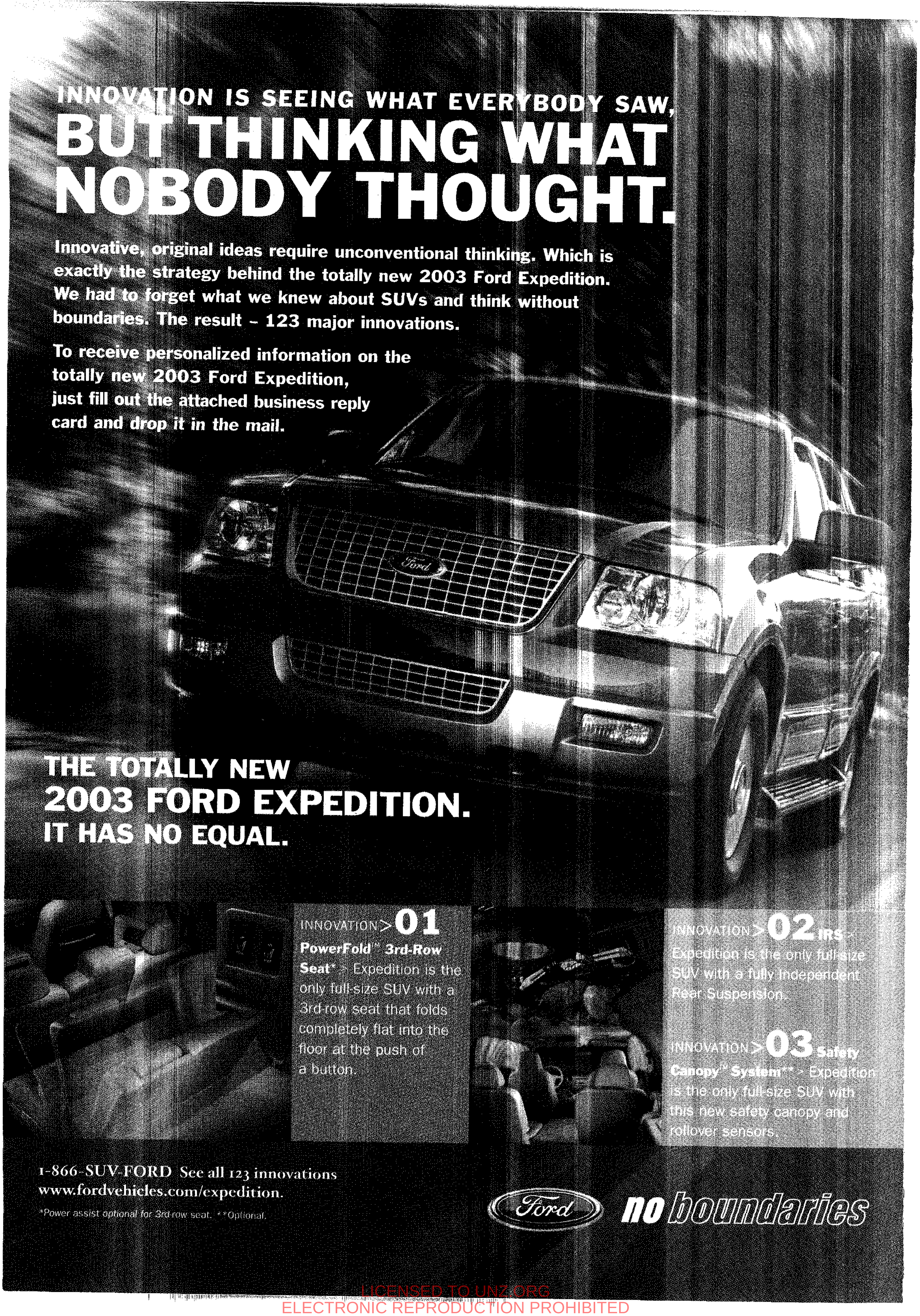

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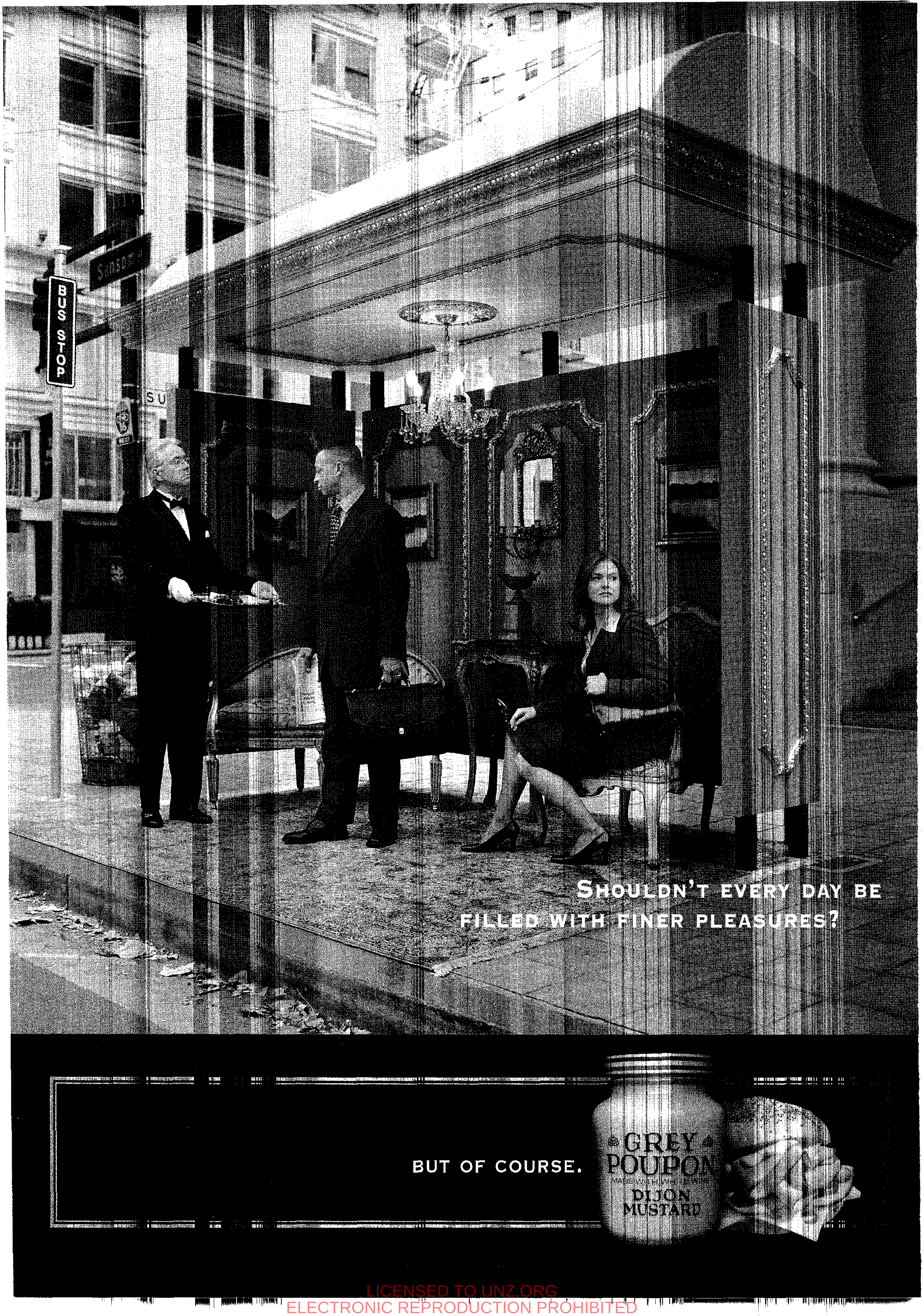
SPINNING THROUGH SONOMA AND NAPA

by David Aston

In the subterranean spa, while bathers showered in softly lit alcoves, Rachel and I relaxed in the pool. Terrycloth-robed pilgrims padded in rubber sandals from the cloistered grounds to the sanctum where we sat. Having rehydrated in the warm mineral water, we repaired to the eucalyptus-scented steam room, then relaxed by the fireplace awaiting aromatherapy massages while sipping Gan Bei Depth Recharger, an herbal tonic. Afterward we dined on herb- and mustard-infused *ahi* tuna with fennel-onion relish, balsamic glacé, and three different kinds of beans. According to the menu, the dish contained two hundred and sixty-one calories, six grams of fat, and forty-three milligrams of cholesterol. But we weren't counting.

The words sybaritic and Greco-Roman come to mind, yet we were nowhere near Greece or southern Italy. We were at the Sonoma Mission Inn & Spa in California wine country. This was our last night of a six-day tour of Napa and Sonoma counties led by Backroads, the world's largest "active travel" outfitter. The day had begun in Napa Valley, where I climbed along a rushing stream into the redwoods on Mount Veeder while Rachel took a gentler route through the rolling Carneros region, known for chardonnay and pinot noir. Near the imposing Old World façade of the Domaine Carneros sparkling-wine château, a fox had crossed the road in front of her, then sat sniffing the air in the vineyard as she stopped to watch. After rendezvousing for lunch, we explored the press house and storage caves at Buena Vista, the oldest premium winery in Northern California.


BUS STOP
Sansome
SHOULDN'T EVERY DAY BE FILLED WITH FINER PLEASURES?
BUT OF COURSE.
GREY POUPON
MADE WITH WHITE WINE
DIJON MUSTARD

Rachel finally decided to call it quits at Ravenswood Winery, accepting a ride in the van as I pedaled on to the inn.

This was the first time that Rachel and I had taken a bike trip together. For the occasion, we'd signed up with Backroads because it offers trips with varying degrees of challenge. As a serious cyclist, sometime wine writer, and long-term resident of the San Francisco Bay Area, I was already familiar with most of the routes we'd be riding. Rachel, however, who can't stand traffic and is more of a walker than cyclist (not to mention an overworked teacher and psychotherapist), was attracted to the spa element in the itinerary. Thus, even though I seldom visit public tasting rooms and never consume wine during bike rides, we agreed to meet halfway: If Rachel were willing to ride on asphalt, I would join the ranks of casual cyclists and sippists.

HEADY BEGINNINGS

The trip began at the gabled gingerbread mansion of Madrona Manor in Dry Creek Valley, near the town of Healdsburg. At an informal wine tasting before dinner, we were treated to a glass of sauvignon blanc from Hanna Winery and merlot from Lambert Bridge Winery. Our leaders for the week, Matt Allen and Jenny Fung, confirmed that tasting too many wines is a mistake people make only on the first day of a bike trip—a lesson that Backroads has learned from experience, since its wine-country itinerary is one of the oldest in the company's catalog.

Based not far away in Berkeley, Backroads began business in 1979 by taking people on camping and inn trips, with a van ferrying baggage from point to point so cyclists would not be burdened by extra weight. Since then, the company has matured with its clients: "Deluxe" camping is still an option for some trips to the most scenic and remote parts of the world, but today most of Backroads' accommodations are luxury hotels accompanied by gourmet restaurants. For my money, this is the way to go. I like camping as much as the next guy, but if I'm transporting myself under my own power, I start looking for the lap of luxury as soon as I'm off my bike. In its challenging but sybaritic way, the Backroads itinerary suited me perfectly.

The next morning Rachel was happy to learn that all Backroads bikes have full suspension, equipped with shock absorbers to cushion bumps in the road. She had nothing to fear from cars, as our route (described at breakfast by Matt and Jenny, who passed out mile-by-mile directions describing short, medium, and long options) followed the quietest, most bucolic lanes in the area. West Dry Creek Road lilted past ancient rows of gnarled grapevines, each one exuding the characteristics of a tiny tree. On our left, terraced slopes ascended toward a conifer-covered ridgeline, while on our right, morning fog was just lifting off the level valley floor, displaying the refrigerant properties that maintain acidity in grapes.

I was riding slowly to keep company with Rachel who, after we crossed a short saddle into Alexander Valley (a sprawling expanse known for lush cabernet sauvignon), announced that she was having a wonderful time. "I love the pace," she said of cycling. "It's not too fast and it's not too slow, so you can see and smell the landscape. It's a more physical experience of geography than you have in a car; you really get a sense of how long a hill is."

SHAPING UP

Matt and Jenny had prepared a picnic at Field Stone Winery. After sampling the selection of fresh bread, local cheeses, olives, peppers, sun-dried tomatoes, pasta salad, fruit torte, and cheesecake, Rachel decided that she'd pedaled far enough (twenty miles) for her first day. Hence, she loaded her bike onto the Backroads trailer and drove with Jenny into Calistoga, where we'd be spending the night.

This freed me to ride as fast I wanted, so I set out along rural, two-lane Highway 128 to the east. This was a classic California landscape. As I clipped along toward the sunlit ramparts of

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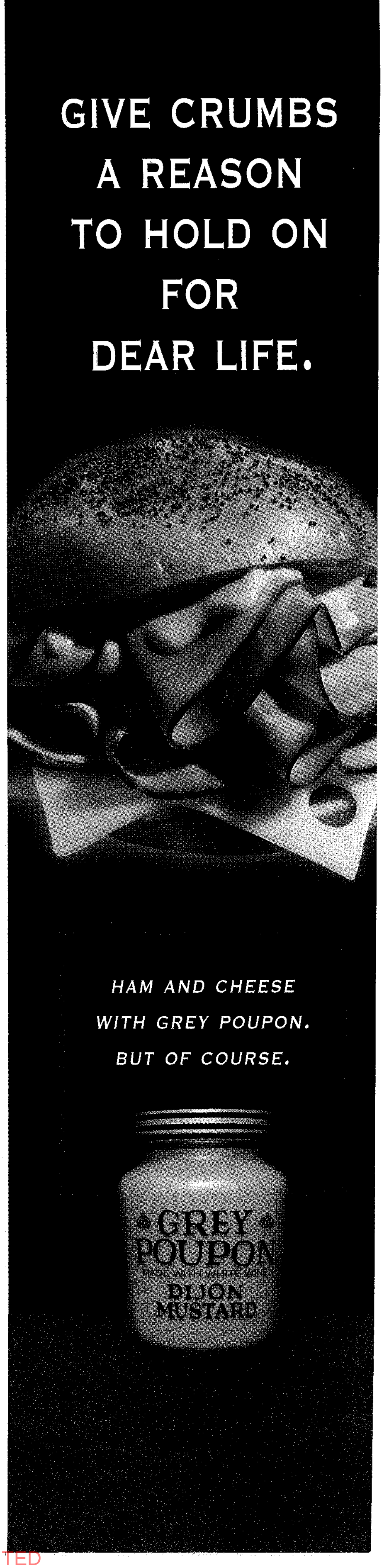


Mount St. Helena (onetime home of Robert Louis Stevenson), creeks were running everywhere alongside the road, and maroon madrones and moss-hung oaks suffused the emerald slopes. By the time I arrived in Calistoga—my favorite Napa Valley resort town, whose underground springs and mud baths have made it a mineral-water mecca—Rachel was in an outdoor jacuzzi with steam rising from its surface.

We dined that night at Catahoula Restaurant & Saloon, owned by Jan Birnbaum, a native Louisianan who trained under Chef Paul Prudhomme in New Orleans before emigrating to the West Coast. Despite regular visits to Calistoga, I'd never eaten at this place, probably because I don't associate Southern-inspired cuisine with California wine country. But after dining there that night, I plan to do so from now on. Our table of ten employed a group strategy, ordering a selection of appetizers—rooster gumbo, lemon grits dumplings, and "crispy little fish with horseradish barley malt mayonnaise." Passing them all around, I remembered why I love Louisianan food no matter where it's found.

As we ate, I learned that many of my companions had travelled with Backroads before. One, a forty-year-old insurance executive from Chicago, said she called the company when she was in the mood for either cushiness or South America. (She'd had positive experiences with Backroads in Ecuador and Patagonia.) Another, a seventy-two-year-old woman on her eighth tour, said she liked Backroads because its itineraries made her feel "safe and secure." Her daughter, a Texas history professor sitting across the table, seemed to speak for the majority when she said: "Most people I know are so busy that a stress-free trip like this is a great change of pace. Everything is taken care of, so you can completely relax."

My own motivations were manifested on the table. Since I'm a wine and food aficionado, I need to counter the effects of gourmandism by burning calories, whether I'm on vacation or not. Thus, for me, active travel is the only acceptable kind.

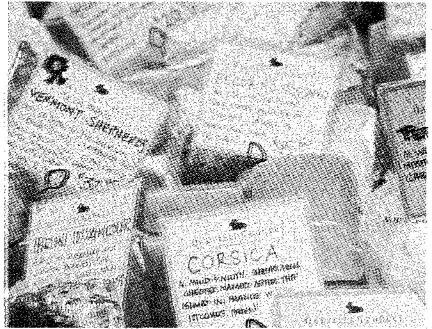
ON A ROLL

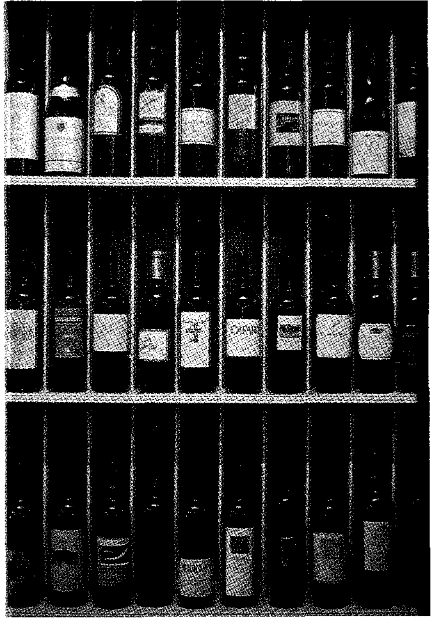
The next morning we bicycled the length of Napa Valley to the town of Yountville—home, dare I point out, of the famous French Laundry restaurant (not to mention Bouchon and Bistro Jeanty). The flat topography enabled Rachel to increase her output to thirty miles. The next day she pedaled even farther, completing a different kind of climb to the other side of Napa to the modern, Spanish-owned Artesa Winery—with its semi-subterranean architecture enhanced by an art gallery and sculpture garden. Unfolding vistas of San Francisco Bay kept drawing her upward through turns in the road until she reached the hilltop terrace. There she sat basking in the view and the glow of her achievement.

After Rachel bailed out in Sonoma, I kept following the directions on my handlebars to the Sonoma Mission Inn & Spa, discovering backstreets through the town that, in nearly two decades of association with it, I'd never known existed. The next morning, riding out Sonoma Mountain Road after spending the night at the spa, I realized that this was the first time I'd made a continuous circuit of Napa and Sonoma counties—on a bike or off.

By the time we reached Bodega Bay on the roiling shore of the Pacific, Rachel and I had obtained rewards both intended and unexpected. She didn't feel "stuck in ON anymore," and I'd gained a new perspective on a place that I thought I knew like the back of my hand. Having shared a vigorous physical outing (albeit without exercising any more—or less—than either of us cared to), we realized as we rolled back toward Healdsburg that somehow we'd gotten into better shape even while indulging in shameless epicurism. We'd embarked on the trip intending to meet halfway, but we'd managed to have it both ways—rigorous and sensuous—instead.

(David Aston is a California-based journalist who writes frequently about wine and the outdoors.)





from top to bottom © Markham Johnson, Sonoma Mission Inn: © Ben Davidson, © Ben Davidson, © Robert Houser

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basketball, along with developing his business interests. He is already an honorary deputy for the Orange County sheriff's office in Orlando, where he once surprised an international group of SWAT-team officers who were performing a practice exercise of freeing a hostage from a bus by playing the hostage.

In Los Angeles, he is training to become an auxiliary member of the Port of Los Angeles Police, and he drives around with a senior officer, learning about how the law works. O'Neal frequently practices his law-enforcement techniques on his teammates and the Lakers' staff: Mark Madsen, a six-foot-nine-inch, two-hundred-and-thirty-six-pound twenty-six-year-old, who has become a close friend of O'Neal's since joining the Lakers, last season, told me, "He will come up to me and put me in all these police grips. He'll say, 'Which wrist did you have surgery on?' and then he'll do it on the other wrist. If I put up any sort of fight, I'm on the ground, quick."

O'Neal hasn't arrested anyone yet, but he does horse around by threatening to make citizen's arrests on Lakers employees, and regularly orders members of the team's support staff to stand against the wall with their legs spread. It's unlikely that he will ever be a beat cop, since what he really wants to do is be a chief of police or run for sheriff, either in Louisiana or in Orlando: "Sheriff is an elective position, and I don't just want to be a figurehead. And I don't want to win because I'm Shaq, but because I have the knowledge and understand what is going on." O'Neal generally avoids politics (though he recently went to a Nation of Islam meeting to hear Louis Farrakhan speak, and says that he is a friend of the Farrakhan family). He says that he wouldn't run for sheriff on either a Republican or a Democratic ticket, but as an Independent, "like Ross Perot." He told me, "Of course, I am not going to stop crime, make it zero per cent, but I would try."

When O'Neal returns to Orlando this summer, with or without a third championship ring, there will be plenty to do. He may undergo surgery on his foot, which would put him out of action for six to eight weeks. "Without any surgery, nothing is going to change," Robert Mohr, the podiatrist, says. "For ordinary motion, you need about sixty degrees of pain-free movement in your toe. For jumping or running, you need close to ninety degrees. He has maybe twenty or thirty degrees. You imagine a three-hundred-and-fifty-pound body coming down on that joint."

Fortunately, if O'Neal is recovering from surgery he will have the solace of various home improvements that are under way in Orlando, where his house measures thirty-six thousand square feet, and faces four hundred yards of waterfront. He has already added an eight-thousand-square-foot gym and a regulation-size basketball court, and contractors have started on the other side of the house, adding a new swimming pool and another nine thousand square feet of living space, including seven new bedrooms (O'Neal already has a master bedroom with a circular bed measuring twenty feet across), a recreation room, a cigar room, a movie theatre, and a private dance club with a state-of-the-art d.j. booth.

Injuries permitting, O'Neal will also be able to engage in one of his favorite activities—going on the Skycoaster, an amusement-park ride in Orlando, which combines the sensations of hang gliding, bungee jumping, and skydiving. Riders are strapped into harnesses and hoisted to the top of a hundred-foot tower, where they pull a release cord that puts them into a pendulum swing, above an expanse that is the size of a football field, at about sixty miles an hour. The sensation is as close to flying as anyone who is not Superman or Michael Jordan is likely to experience, and O'Neal is fanatical about it.

"It's like a roller coaster, and it is dangerous—if that cord breaks, you can die," O'Neal told me. "It's scary. It feels like you're actually flying. It's like you are falling from the top of a building, and someone grabs you and says, 'O.K., I ain't going to let you die.' And then they swing you—*whoosh*. I go on it all the time." One evening, he flew for two hours, in his own, customized harness; and when other would-be Skycoasters asked for his autograph he offered instead to take them on a ride with him. So all evening astonished patrons stood in line to fly with Shaq, waiting for their chance to swoop through the air, the kind of thing that happens in dreams. ♦

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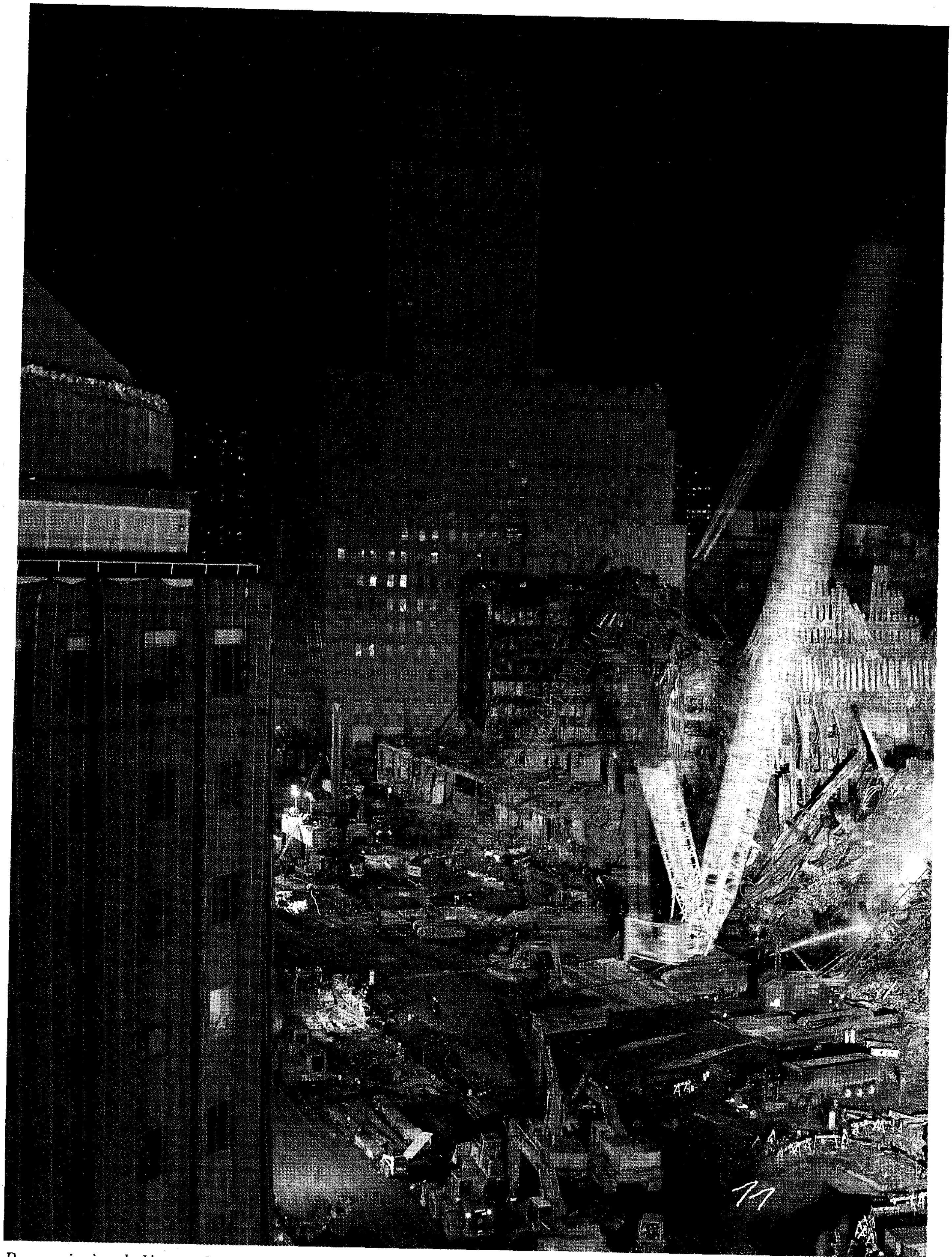


Panoramic view, looking northeast from the World Financial Center, across West Street to the World Trade Center site. September 25, 2001.

PORTFOLIO BY JOEL MEYEROWITZ

A HOLE IN THE CITY

Bordered on the north by Vesey Street, on the south by Liberty, on the east by Church, and on the west by West Street, the World Trade Center site comprises sixteen acres. Without the towers, it seems improbably small, as does the rest of lower Manhattan—shrunken somehow by disaster. The other day, two Spanish tourists who had come to see the site were questioning a police officer on duty nearby. They wanted to know where the second tower had been, and he tried to explain to them that it had been right there, right next to the first. "*Dos edificios—no más*," he said, gesturing at the empty space across the street.

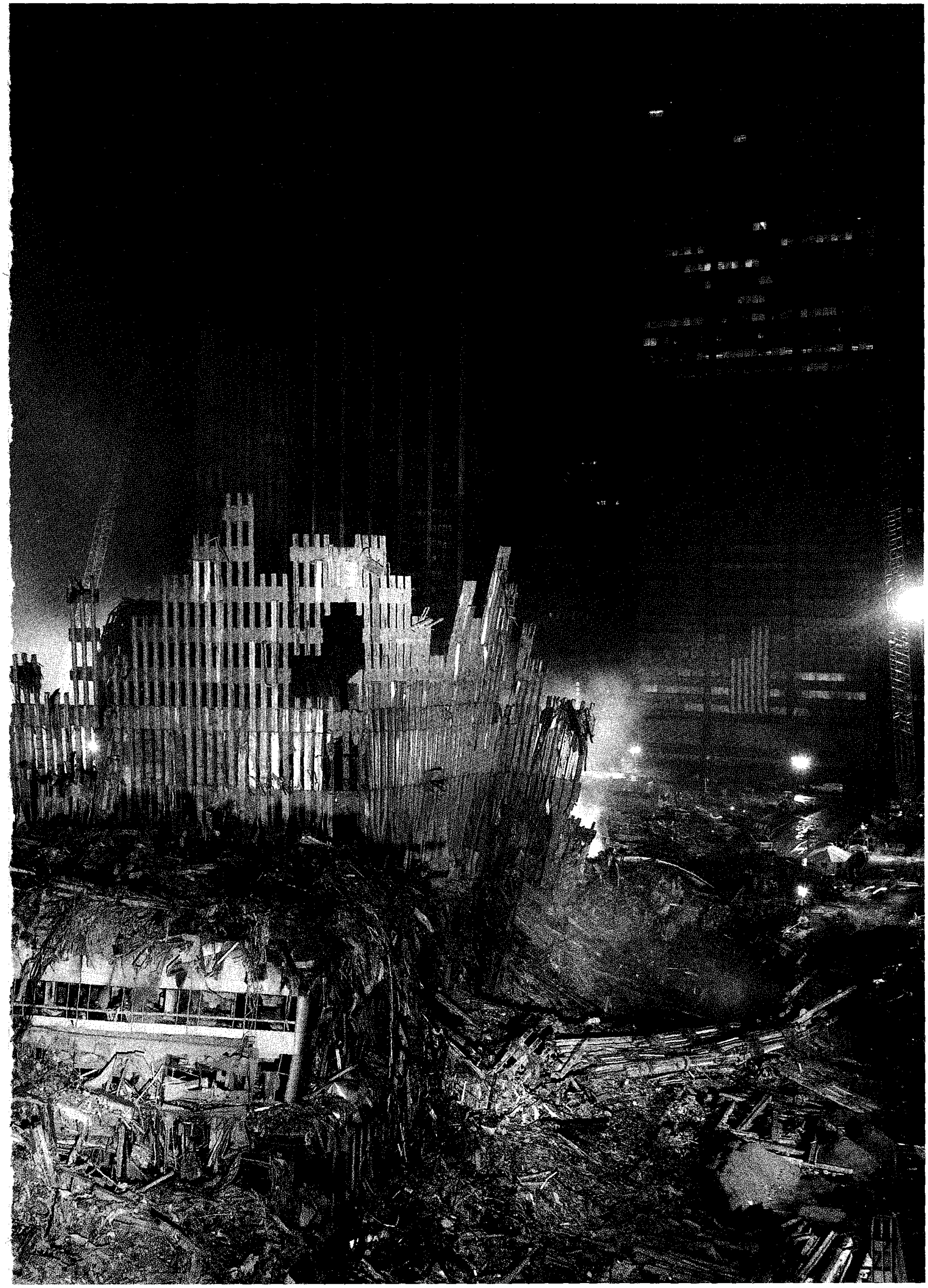
Much of the area immediately surrounding the World Trade Center site has been reopened only in the past few months. "Please pardon our appearance during renovations," requests a placard posted in front of the Brooks Brothers that served as a morgue in the days after the attack. Some businesses have come back to the area—Starbucks, Century 21—but many have not. The words "NYPD Temp HQ—Med Trauma" are spray-painted in black and red on the windows of a defunct Burger King at the corner of Church and Liberty. On another empty storefront, "God Bless" has been scratched in the brownish-gray dust that still clings to most buildings in the area. Ten House, a fire station at the corner of Liberty and Greenwich Streets, was home to two companies, Engine 10 and Ladder 10. It lost four men, and is now being used as a command center for the recovery operations. "You must have an OSHA card for a respirator," a sign on the door reads. "No card, no resp. Got it?"

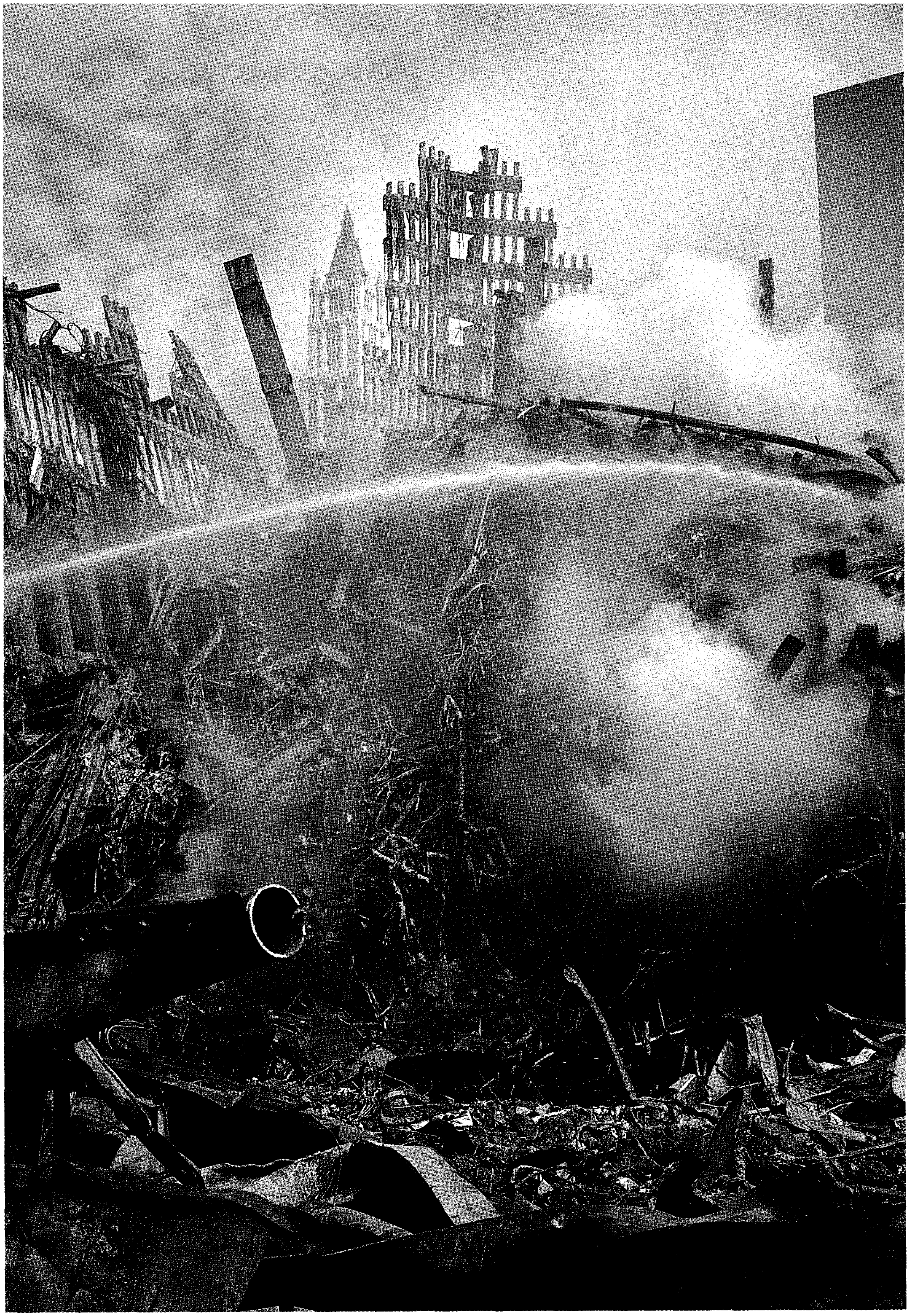
It was expected that the recovery and cleanup effort would take as long as a year. Instead, the job will be done in less than nine months. Some eight hundred people a day have been working in around-the-clock shifts, carting away more than a million and a half tons of concrete and steel. The statistics, grisly as they are, only hint at the magnitude of the horror. Workers have so far found more than nineteen thousand body parts. At this point, remains of less than half of the two thousand eight hundred and twenty-three victims have been identified.

Since the disaster, no one who is not directly involved in the recovery effort has been allowed on the site. For the most part, journalists were included in this ban, but, with the help of the Museum of the City of New York and sympathetic city officials, the photographer Joel Meyerowitz managed to obtain unlimited access. He has made more than a hundred visits, photographing "the pile," as the remains of the Trade Center came to be known, and the men and women working on it, at all times of the day and night. "Life took on a very different quality inside the zone," Meyerowitz says. "Even though you might have been doing ordinary things, they were being done in this pall of smoke and stench and fire and death." So far, he has taken more than seven thousand photographs; he expects to take a thousand more before he is done.

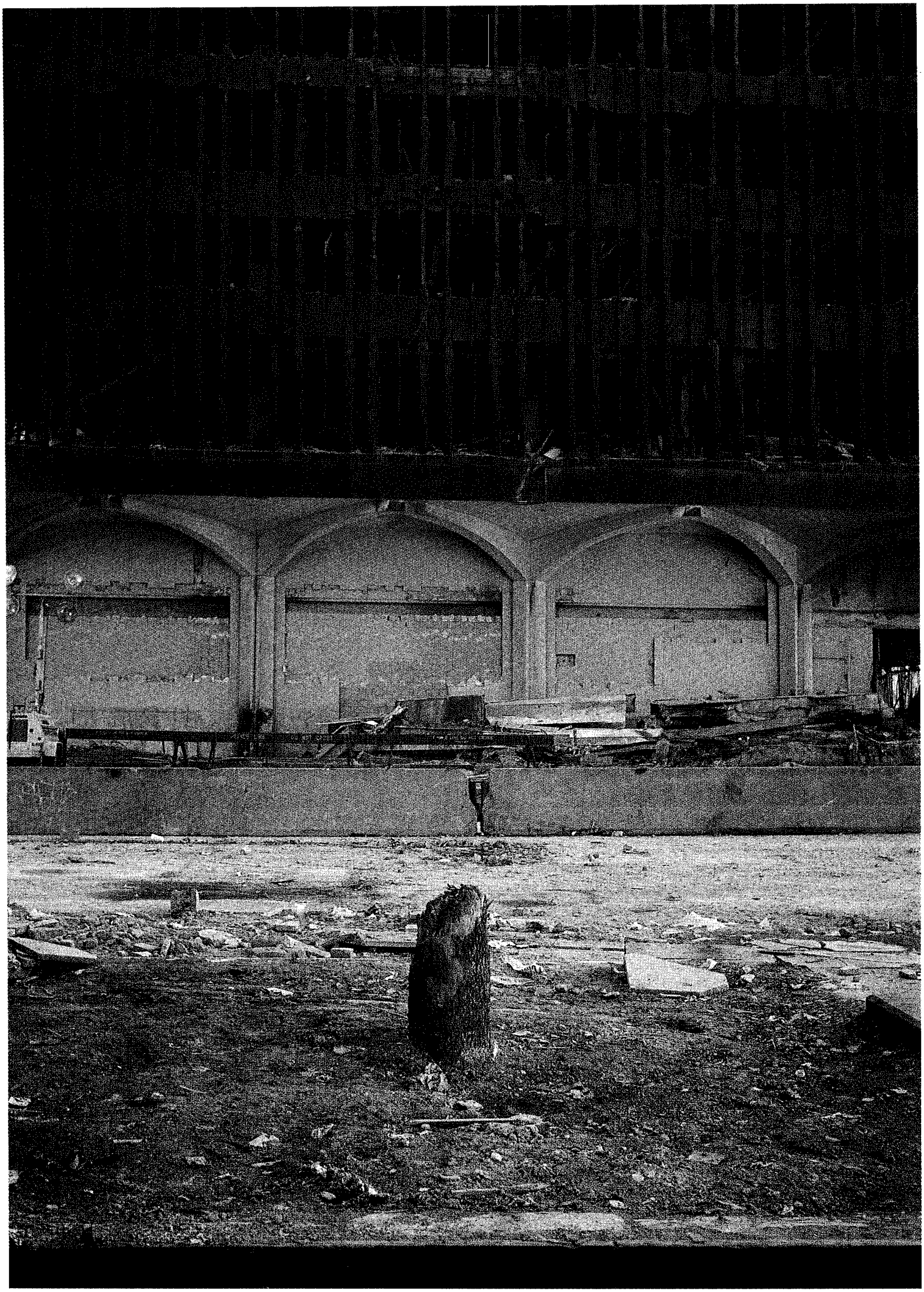
For those who want to get a glimpse of the site, the city has set up a viewing platform on Church Street. Every day, thousands line up, even though the view, at this point, is largely unremarkable: some gray construction trailers, men in white hard hats and fluorescent-orange vests, several American flags, and a deep hole in the ground out of which a truck occasionally rumbles. On a recent chilly weekday afternoon, the line stretched from Church Street down Fulton and around the corner onto Broadway, circling the graveyard behind St. Paul's Chapel. The graveyard fence was strewn with several generations of offerings—flags, flowers, stuffed animals, and T-shirts of rescue companies from around the country. As the crowd inched forward, the mood shifted. The chattering grew quieter, then stopped. Once up on the platform, people were allowed five minutes. They saw how little there was left to see, but remained, still looking for something. They took pictures, and then moved on.

—*Elizabeth Kolbert*

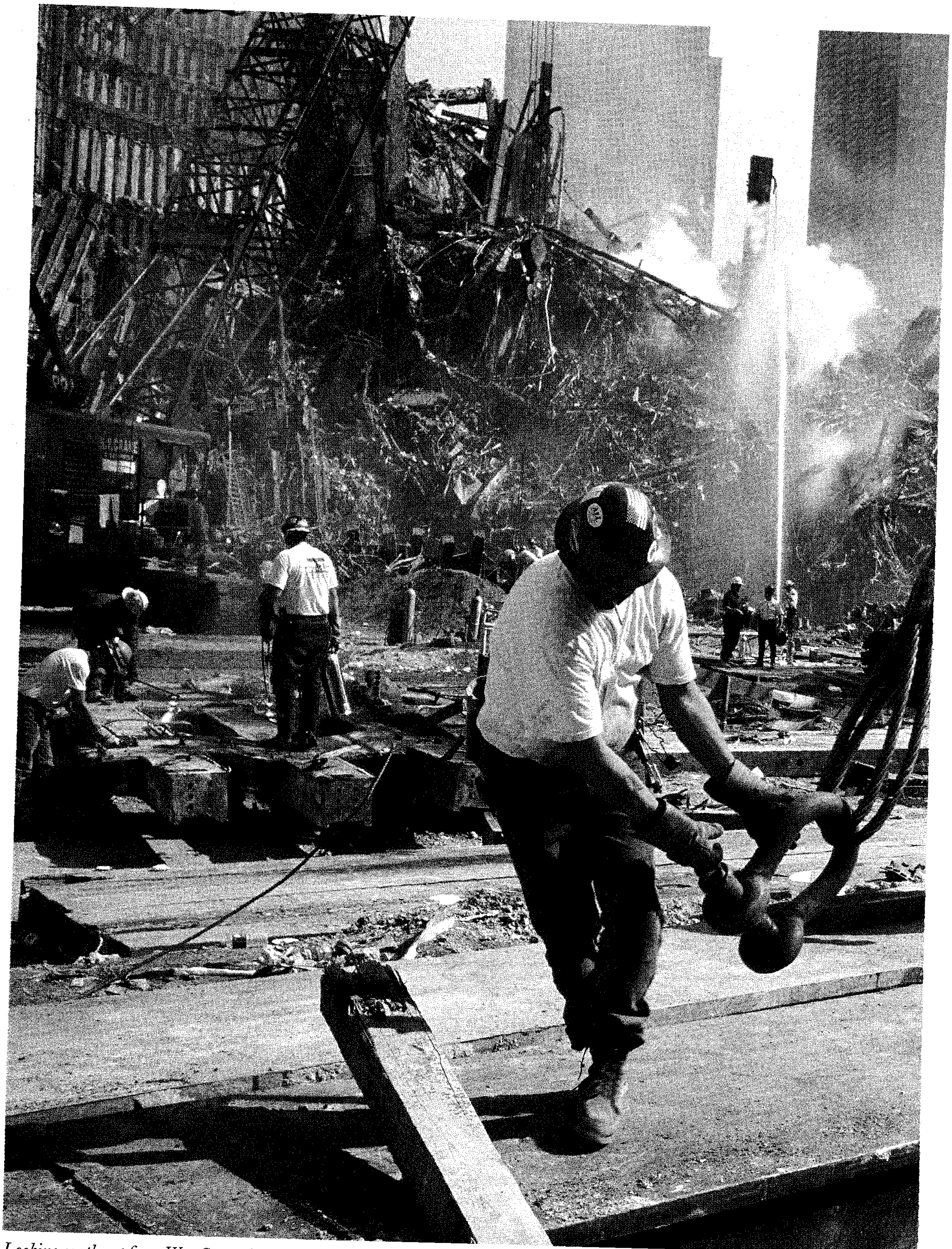




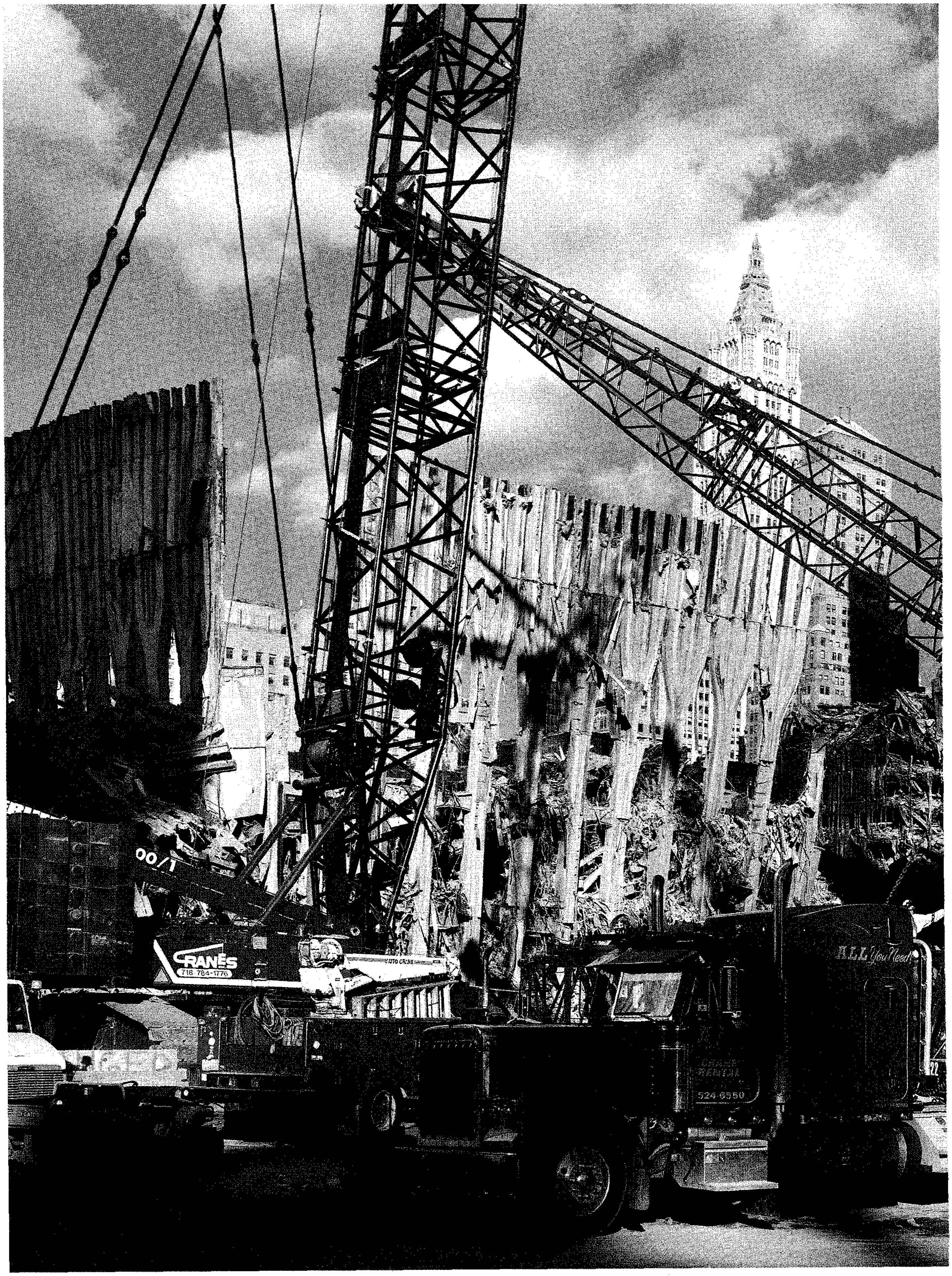
The eastern view from the base of the north-tower pile. September 23, 2001.



The stump of a tree destroyed on the day of the attacks, on the walk leading to the World Trade Center plaza. October 11, 2001.



Looking southeast from West Street: ironworkers at the site. September 23, 2001.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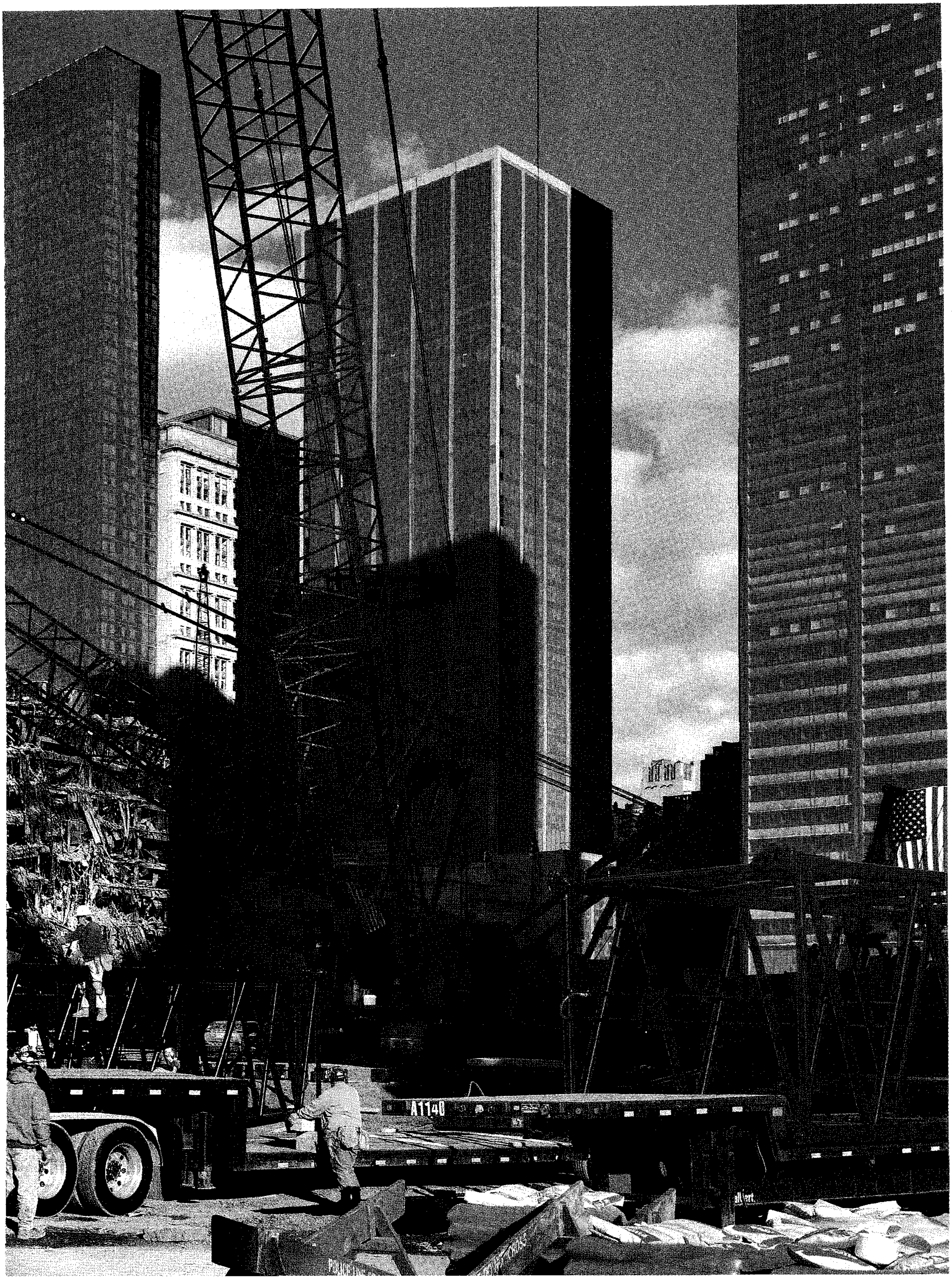
Looking northeast from Liberty Street at the surviving walls of the south tower. October 7, 2001.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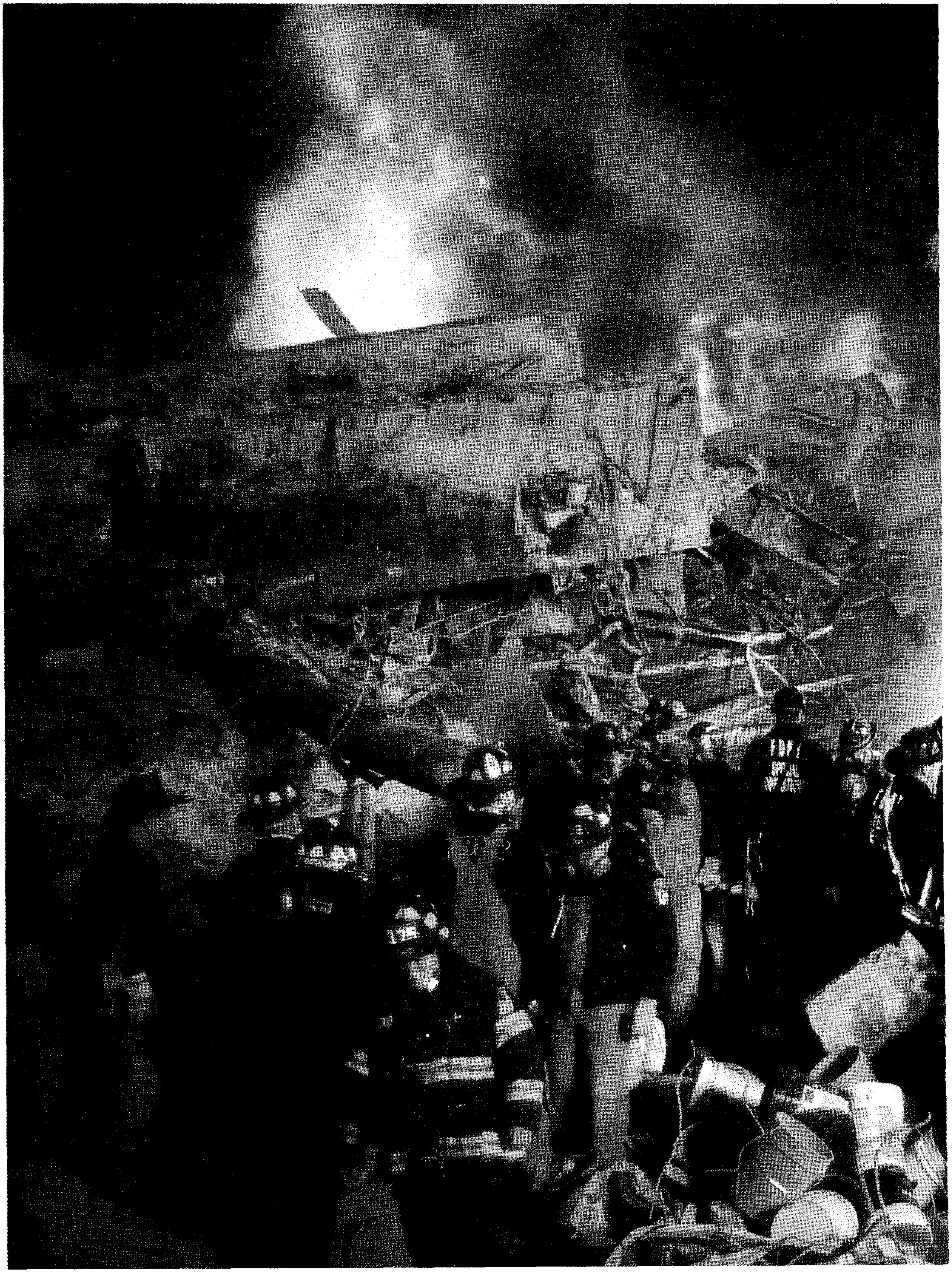
FDNY
SPECIAL OPERATIONS
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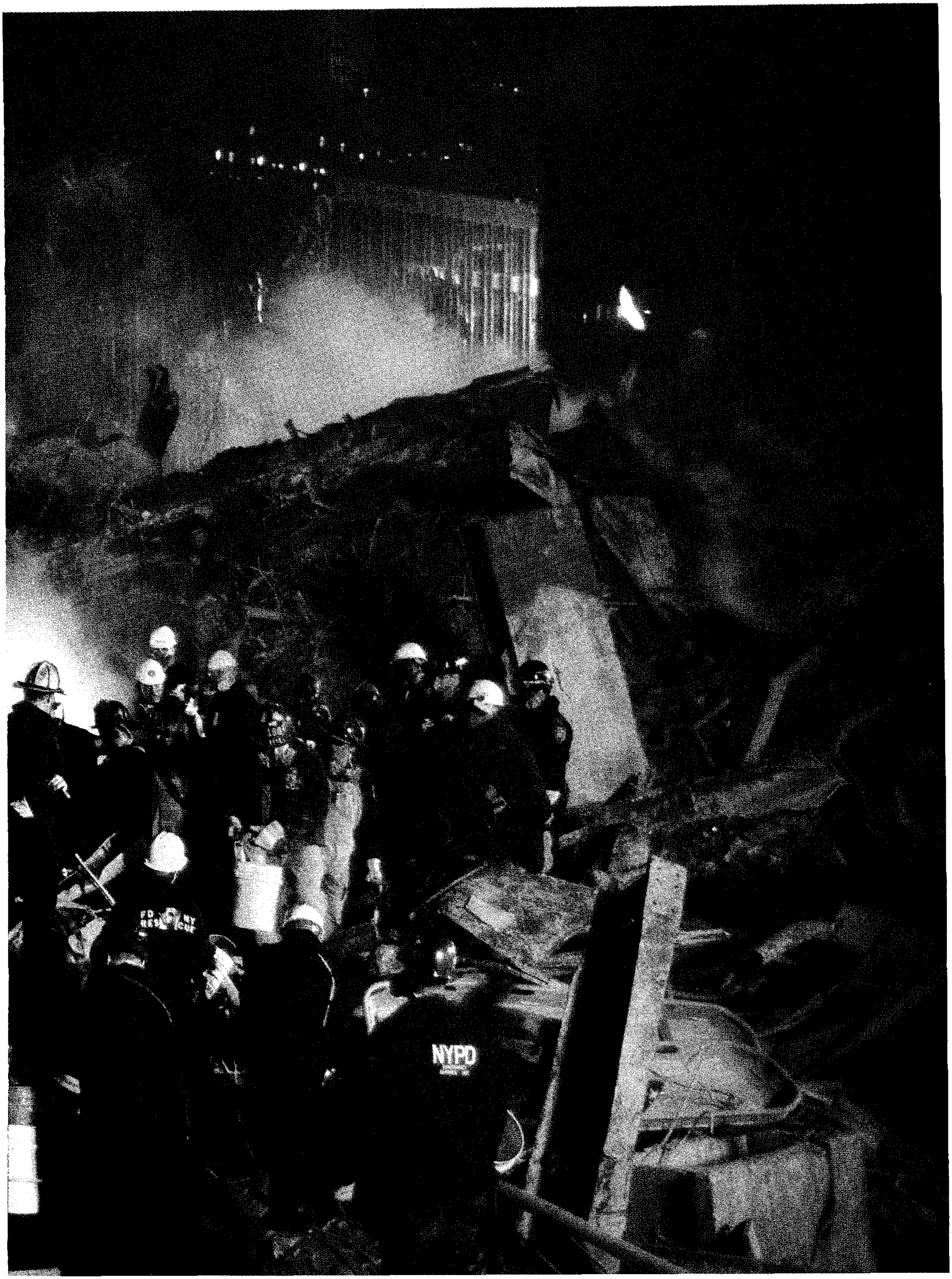
Finding five more bodies in the south-tower pile. October 26, 2001.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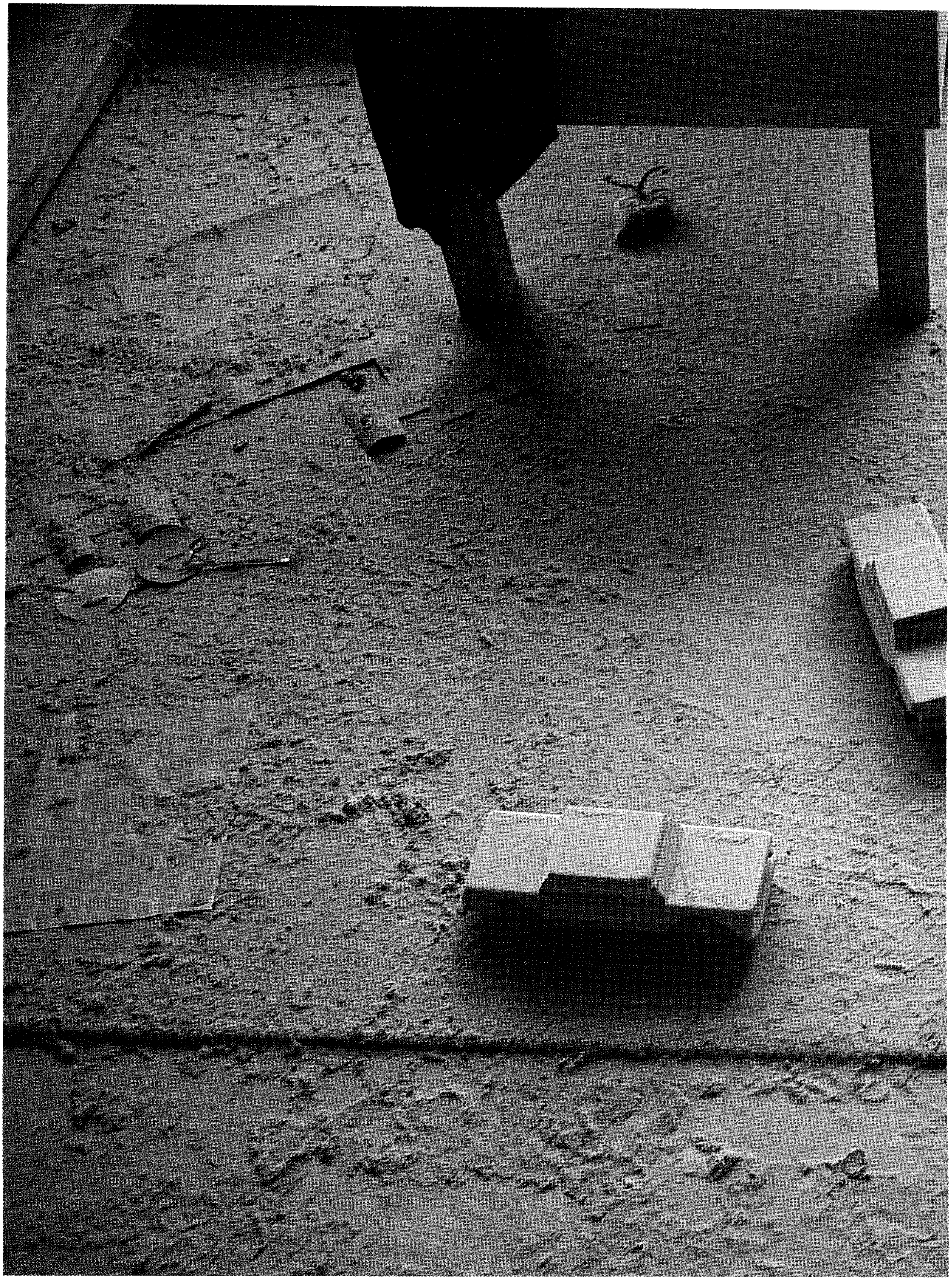
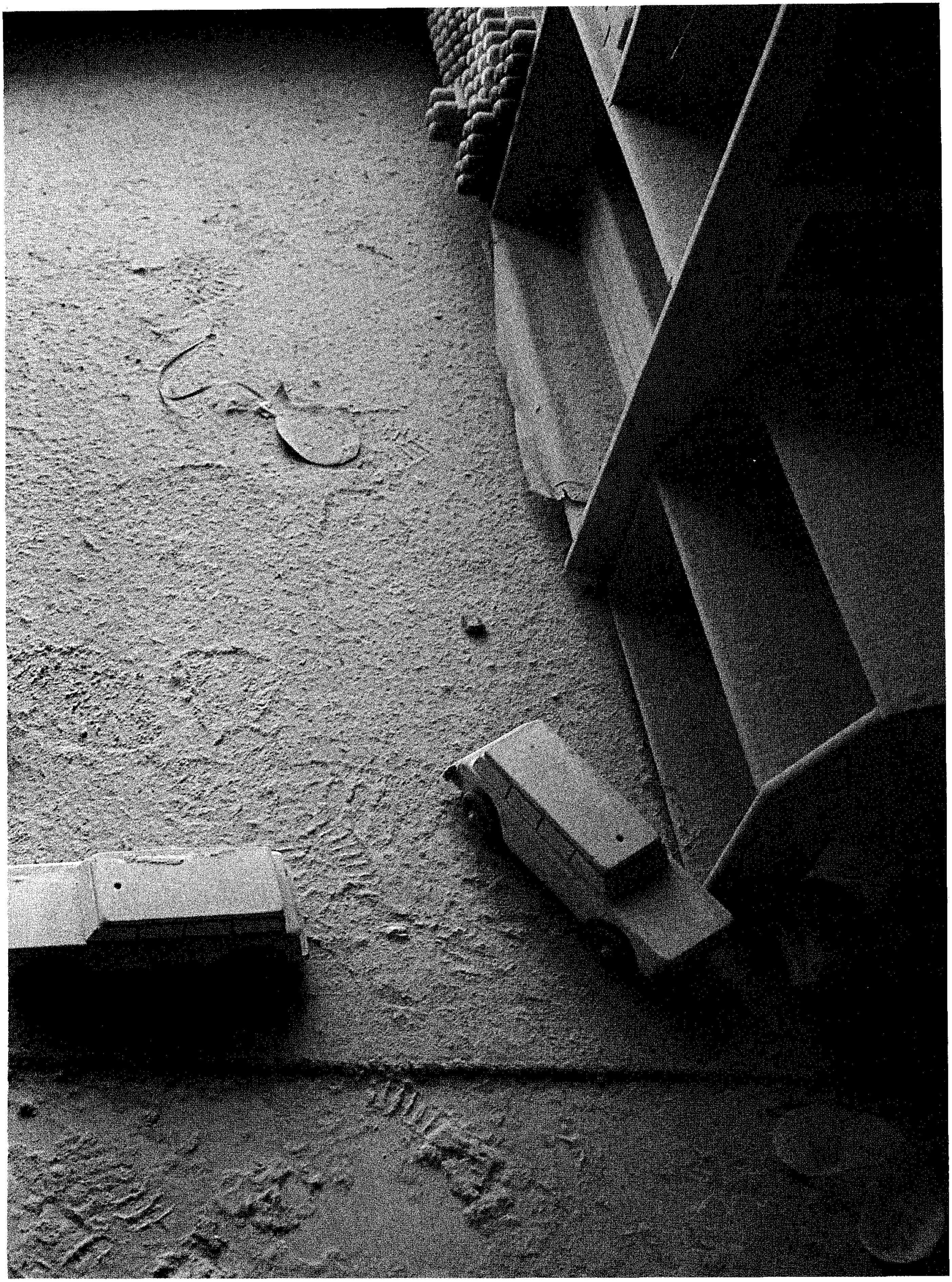
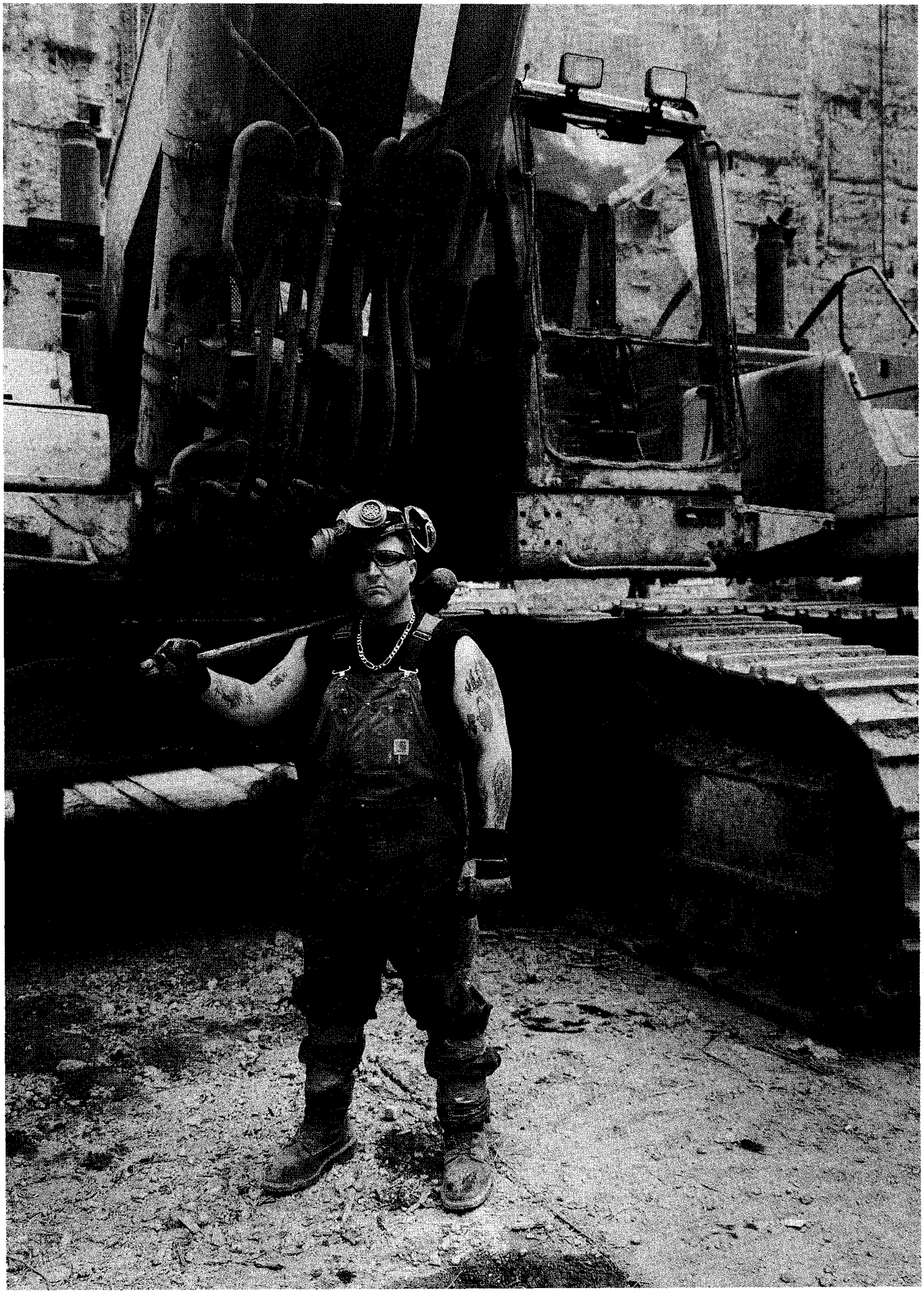
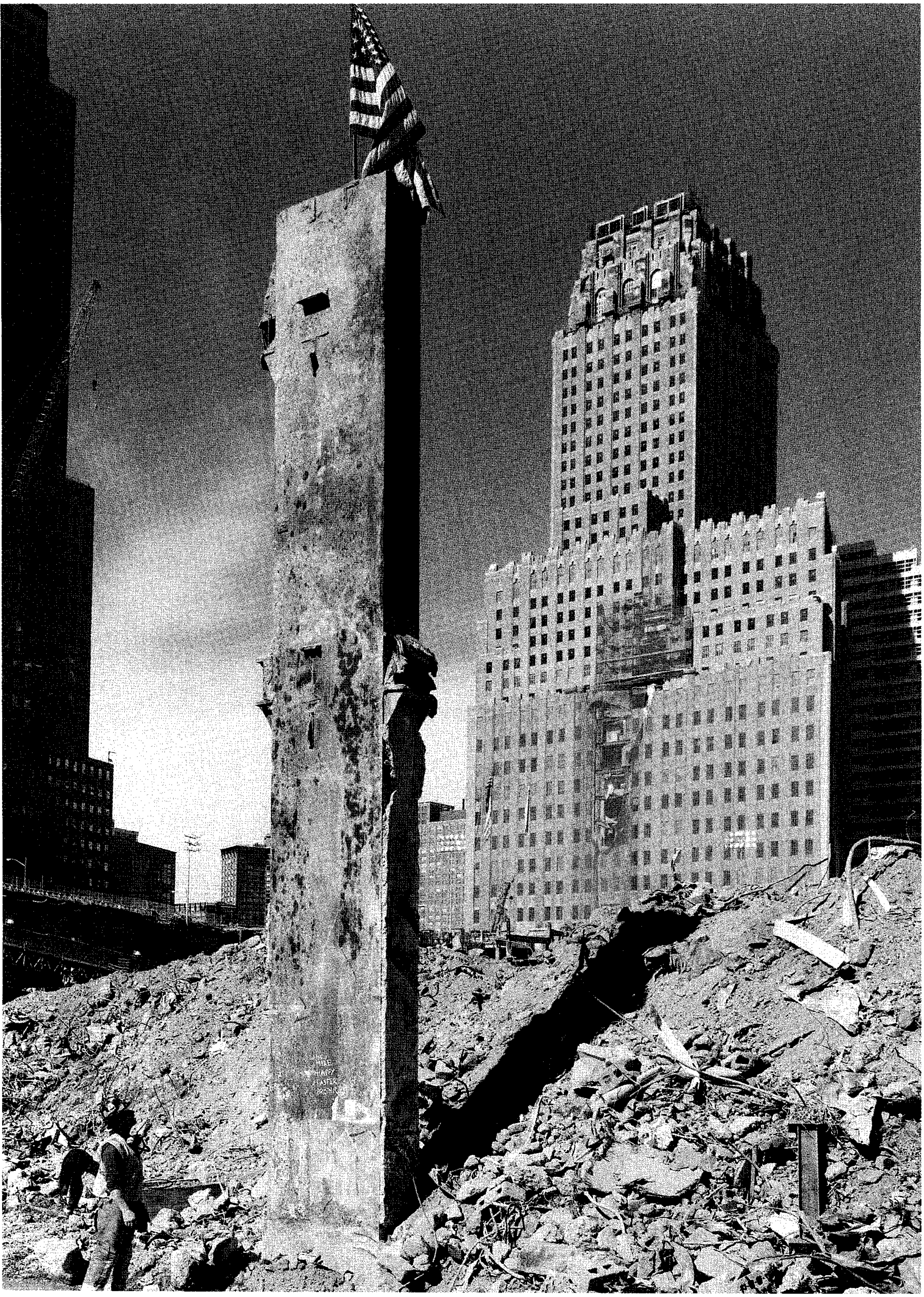


A day-care center across the street from the north tower. November 15, 2001.

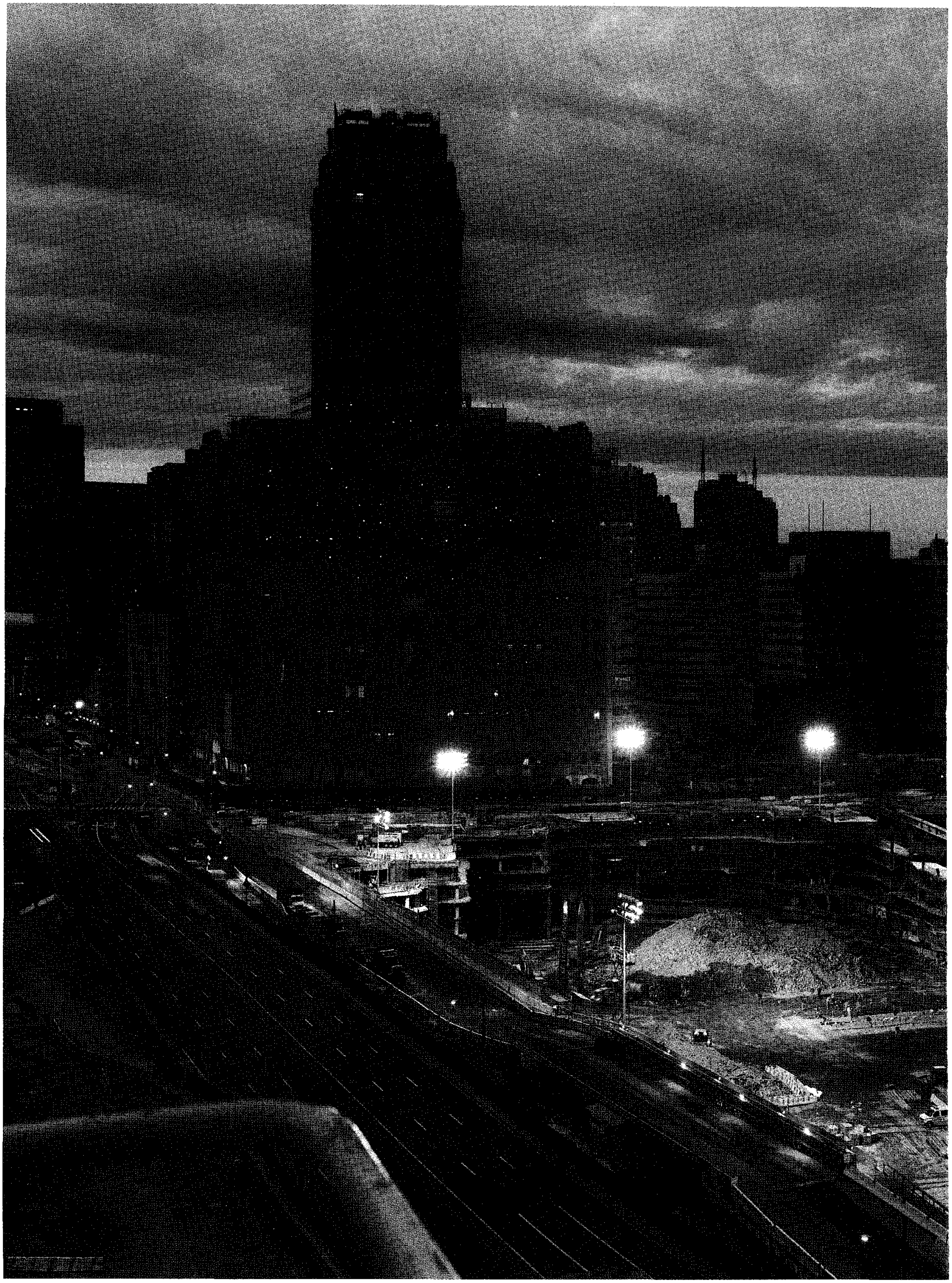




A mechanic working near Dey Street, at the east wall of the site. March 30, 2002.



A column from the south tower, which will be the last piece of the buildings to be removed from the site. March 30, 2002.



The view looking northeast from the World Financial Center, as the cleanup neared completion. May 1, 2002.

ARIEL MEYEROWITZ GALLERY/WTC ARCHIVE, MUSEUM OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK

THE SKY LINE

GROUNDWORK

How the future of Ground Zero is being resolved.

BY PAUL GOLDBERGER

For much of the eighteenth century, Greenwich Street marked the western edge of Manhattan. It ran along the Hudson River from the southern tip of the island to a rural precinct—Greenwich Village—two miles north. By 1800, after landfills had been thrust into the river, Greenwich Street was a couple of blocks inland. It was once a fashionable place to live, but, as docks were built to the west, the neighborhood became crowded with boarding houses and industrial buildings. "This section of the metropolis is beginning to pass all toleration," George Templeton Strong, a Greenwich Street resident, wrote in his diary in 1845. Strong moved to Gramercy Park. In 1868, an elevated railway was built on Greenwich Street, from the Battery to Cortlandt Street. Toward the end of the century, the city's first Arab community, mostly immigrants from Lebanon and Syria, settled on the street's southern blocks.

In the mid-twentieth century, the area around Greenwich and Cortlandt Streets was filled with run-down office buildings, old warehouses, and the largest collection of electronics stores in the world, an amalgam of small shops known as Radio Row. And then, in 1968, a big chunk of Greenwich Street ceased to exist. Five blocks of it, along with three streets that crossed it from east to west, were obliterated to make way for the World Trade Center, which required sixteen acres of unbroken land. The architect who designed the Trade Center, Minoru Yamasaki, believed that streets were relics of a messy and rambunctious past. Superblocks—big, open expanses of concrete that served as podiums for modern buildings—were much more appealing.

Between the completion of the Trade Center, in 1973, and its sudden destruction, on September 11th last year, there were two Greenwich Streets—a short, stubby remnant that extended for a few blocks south of Liberty Street, and a longer section that began just north of the Trade Center and went uptown to Gansevoort Street in the West Village. In 1987, a developer, Larry Silverstein, built a huge slab of a building, 7 World Trade Center, which created a wall between the northern section of Greenwich Street and the rest of the Trade Center complex. The building, which housed the command center of the city's Office of Emergency Management, burned and collapsed late in the afternoon on September 11th. Now that it and the twin towers are gone, it is possible to look up and down the original route of Greenwich Street for the first time in more than thirty years.

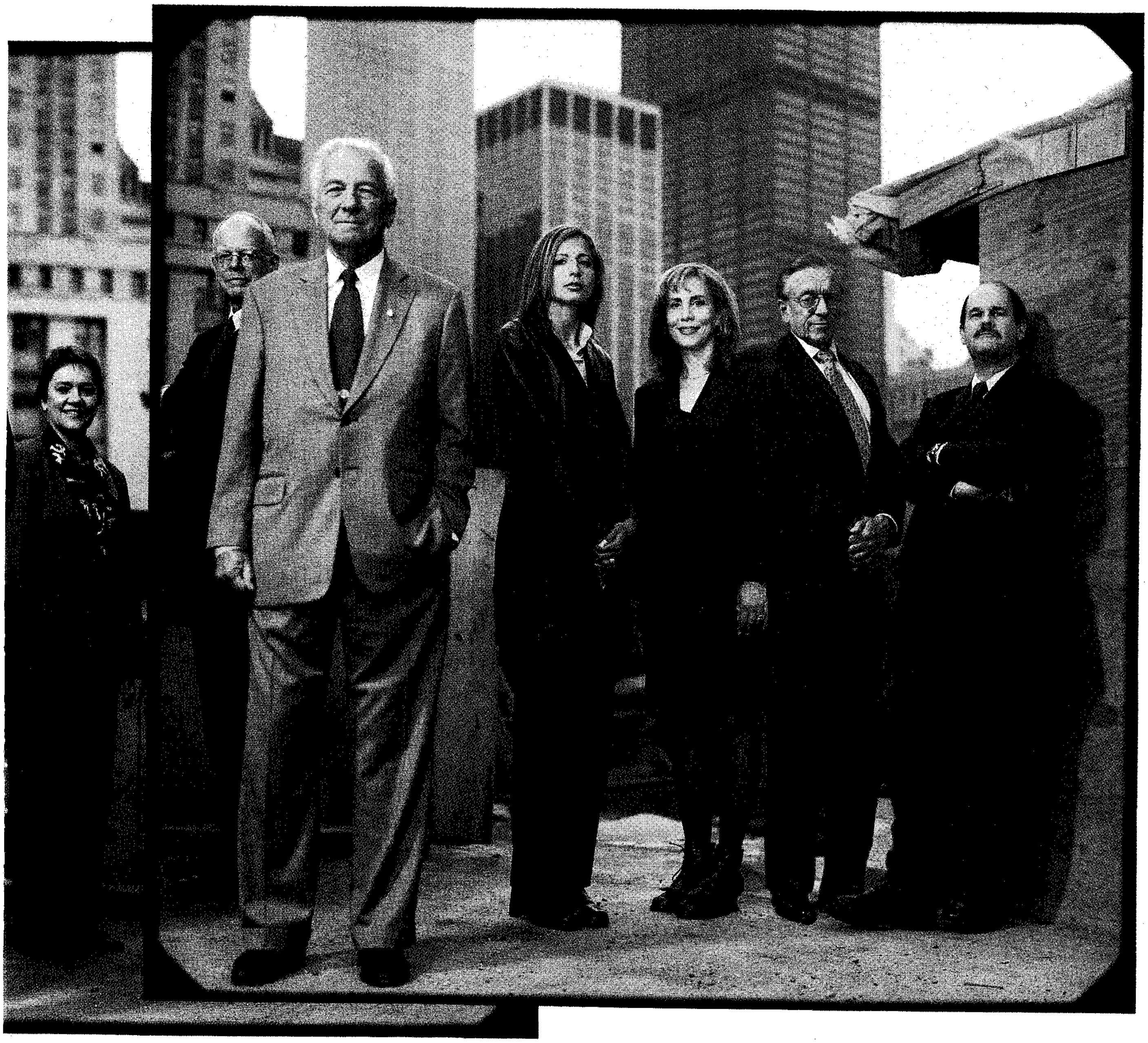
The terrorist attacks of September 11th were mass murder on a scale that still seems unimaginable, but it hasn't been possible to remain paralyzed by the horror. In coping with the physical damage, we have been forced to rethink a part of the city wholesale, and we have the opportunity to fix a lot of mistakes. The elimination of Greenwich Street to make way for the World Trade Center represents what was wrong with an entire generation's worth of architecture and planning.

That Greenwich Street will be restored to its original state, at least as an unimpeded thoroughfare, is one of the few things that seem certain about the future of the World Trade Center site, which has inspired more public forums, hearings, debates, op-ed articles, and design proposals than any urban-planning question in the city's history. There won't be firm plans for the site until the end of the year, at the earliest, which irritates some people—like Andrew Cuomo, who is running for governor, and the members of the editorial boards of the New York *Times* and the New York *Post.* They think that the planners are being unreasonably slow. But if you consider the enormity of what happened on September 11th and the magnitude of the task of rebuilding, they are working fairly quickly. Dealing with the site is the greatest logistical challenge the city has faced in modern times, and deciding how to handle this challenge is, in effect, a referendum about what the city's symbolic center should be.

Barclay and Greenwich Streets, April 12, 200
Taylor and David Childs, architects, Skidmo
Mission; Madelyn Wils, chairman, Communi

CORBIS SABA

When the World Trade Center was conceived, in the early nineteen-sixties, city planning was still dictated by autocrats like Nelson Rockefeller and Robert Moses, who was the public-works czar of New York for nearly half a century. But Moses's approach was being



oseph Seymour, executive director, Port Authority; Peter Kalikow, chairman, Metropolitan Transportation Authority; Marilyn Jordan wings & Merrill; John Whitehead, chairman, Lower Manhattan Development Corporation; Monica Iken, founder, September's oard 1; Larry Silverstein, developer; Robert Yaro, president, Regional Plan Association. Photographic collage by Martin Schoeller.

undermined by that of the critic Jane Jacobs, who celebrated street life and neighborhoods, and who helped to kill the Lower Manhattan Expressway, a Moses project. Autocracy has now given way almost completely to populism. It seems a little incongruous that a patrician, John Whitehead, has been assigned the task of coördinating the plans for the rebuilding of lower Manhattan. Whitehead was the co-chairman of Goldman, Sachs. He has an elegant office filled with antiques in a sleek glass skyscraper in midtown, where he tends to his philanthropic activities and oversees his art collection. A Matisse watercolor hangs in the reception room, and there are boxes full of Sotheby's catalogues in an assistant's office. Whitehead worked on Wall Street until the mid-nineteen-eighties, when he left to join the Reagan Administration as George Shultz's deputy secretary of state. He has no experience in building or construction. Nevertheless, last fall, when Governor Pataki decided to set up the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation, he evidently felt that he needed someone well connected to the financial world who could bring a statesmanlike gravitas to the rebuilding process, and he asked Whitehead to become the L.M.D.C.'s chairman. "I was at a phase in my life where I was getting out of things, gradually reducing my workload," Whitehead said to me recently. "But the Governor twisted my arm quite hard."

Whitehead is gracious and affable. Although he is not a native New Yorker—he grew up in Montclair, New Jersey, and didn't move into the city full time until his children were grown—he has close ties to both the business and civic communities. I had lunch with him a few weeks ago at the Links Club, a small private club in a neo-Georgian town house on East Sixty-second Street. Whitehead is a man of medium height, with gray hair and a craggy look that calls to mind a prosperous New England farmer. He is eighty, but he looks ten years younger. "I didn't realize how complicated this problem is," he said. "Everything is interrelated. You can't build a building without subways to get to it, and power and communications—all of this has to be planned. The other thing that surprised me is the complexities of the constituencies. There are the families of the victims. They have suffered the most. Then, there are the residents of the area, and the commuters who come from New Jersey, Staten Island, the Bronx—they all have a harder time now. And there are small shopkeepers whose businesses were badly damaged, and developers, and heads of big companies, and culture and the arts and education. There are fifty thousand students down there. All of this has to be taken into consideration."

Whitehead seemed most at ease when he talked about details, the way a person building a house might talk about doorjambs and fixtures. "I can envision a museum as part of the site," he said, "with an entrance and a place to learn something about what happened, and maybe a rotunda with the names of the people who died. And then upstairs more about the World Trade Center, and a place where you can go to the bathroom or buy something to take away."

Whitehead has no obvious agenda, beyond putting a mix of cultural facilities and commercial development on the site. One day not long ago, he announced abruptly that he thought it would be a good idea for Ground Zero to house a biotechnology research facility, so his staff hastily added that to a list of general principles for redevelopment. He has said respectful things to the families of the victims, including how he could imagine devoting a portion of the site to a memorial on a par with the Lincoln Memorial or the Jefferson Memorial. "They're on relatively small but beautiful sites," he said of the memorials in Washington, which is not exactly what many of the family members wanted to hear.

There are a lot of ideas about what kind of memorial should be established, among them the notion that the entire site be dedicated to the victims. This is the extreme view, and it has been advocated vociferously by Monica Iken, a thirty-two-year-old former schoolteacher from Riverdale whose husband, Michael, a bond trader, died on September 11th, a few days after his thirty-seventh birthday. They had been married for eleven months. "I couldn't believe that my whole life was over in an instant," she said to me. "Two weeks after it happened, I knew that I had to go on a mission. I couldn't let it rest." Iken established the September's Mission foundation. "My husband went poof in the air," she said. "I can't mourn at a final resting place. I need somewhere peaceful that I can go to feel his energy, to connect to him. The world is watching to see whether we do the right thing. We have to slow down this process so we can heal."

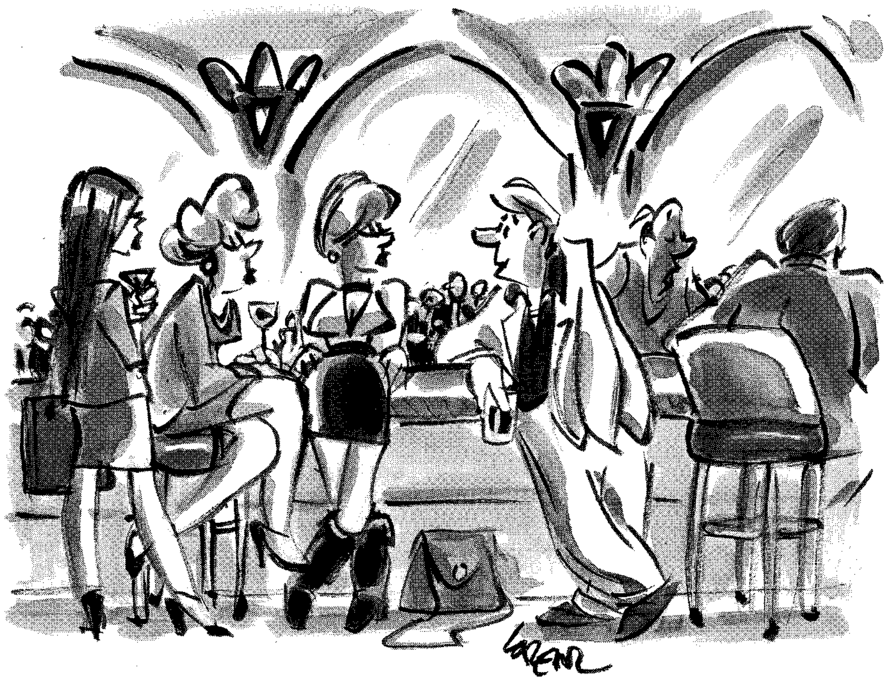
It upsets Iken that the families of victims are not going to have primary control over the memorial design, the way families did in Oklahoma City after the bombing of the federal office building there. "In other cities, they don't put offices and living space and memorials in the same place," she says. "I understand the need to rebuild, to get New York up and running. But they have to understand that it's not a quick fix."

The Lower Manhattan Development Corporation's offices are on the twentieth floor of 1 Liberty Plaza, a skyscraper that overlooks Ground Zero. A room has been set aside there for family members who want to view the site in privacy. The other day, John Whitehead was in the office and was told that there was a widow with three young children in the room who wanted to speak to an official. "I felt it was my duty to talk to her," Whitehead said. "She was a poor woman from out of town, she knew no one in New York, she had gone to see the site for the first time, and when she saw that workers were laying subway tracks she broke down. She said that was where she thought her husband had died."

I asked him what he said to her.

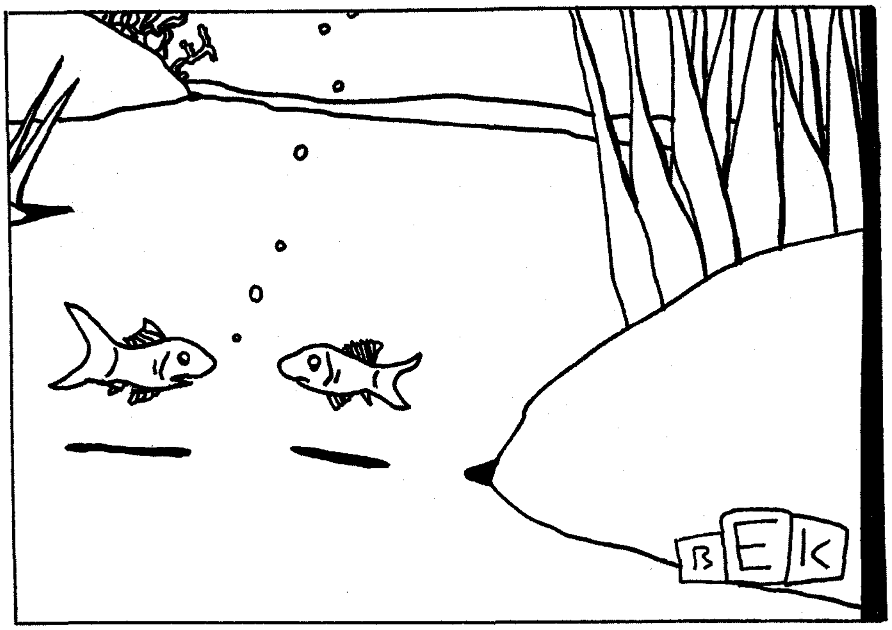
"What is there to say?" he replied. "I tried to comfort her. I told her that there were places that could give her help, and I directed her to them." But the development corporation's job is to build.

Work on new subway tracks and station platforms began a couple of months ago, when the recovery operation wound down and it became possible to start restoring the 1 and 9 subway lines and the PATH transit lines to New Jersey, which were knocked out of service on September 11th. These lines ran directly under the World Trade Center, and unless they were moved some distance away—which in the case of the PATH trains would mean shifting the location of a tunnel under the Hudson River—it would not be possible to keep the site empty and treat it entirely as hallowed



"You're right! There are no women on the Joint Chiefs of Staff—
I can't believe I never noticed that!"

ground. You would have had to interpret hallowed ground as beginning above the subway lines—hallowed ground with the bustle of a major urban transit node underneath it.



"I want the whole package—the little bowl, the colored pebbles, the plastic castle."

• •

The World Trade Center was conceived by David Rockefeller, the chairman of the Chase Manhattan Bank, and his brother Nelson, the governor of New York. Businesses had been moving out of the historic financial district for some time, because midtown was more convenient and livelier. David Rockefeller first tried to stem the move north by building a new headquarters for his bank on Pine Street: an eight-hundred-foot-high glass-and-aluminum tower designed by the architect Gordon Bunshaft of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, which was completed in 1960. Then Rockefeller and the Downtown-Lower Manhattan Association, the area's business group, asked Skidmore to prepare a broader plan for lower Manhattan. They dusted off an idea that had been proposed in the late nineteen-forties and rejected for lack of demand: a complex of buildings on the East River, just south of the Brooklyn Bridge, that would house businesses involved in international trade.

The Rockefeller brothers asked the Port Authority, which combines the qualities of a private corporation with the powers of a government agency, to handle the construction of the new complex. The Port Authority, which was created in 1921, was commissioned to build a rail tunnel under New York Harbor, connecting New Jersey to the Brooklyn piers. The tunnel never got built, but the Port Authority ended up running the Holland Tunnel, the Lincoln Tunnel, the George Washington Bridge, several bridges on Staten Island, and all three New York airports. The Port Authority was experienced at building and managing things, its profitable enterprises gave it plenty of money, and it had the power to condemn property through eminent domain. It could also issue bonds on its own, so the cost of the Trade Center would not have to be applied to the New York State budget. But there was a complication. Since control of the Port Authority was shared by New York and New Jersey, either state's governor could veto a project. Robert Meyner, the governor of New Jersey, was not inclined to endorse a huge project for lower Manhattan without some benefit for New Jersey, and he suggested that the Port Authority take over the nearly bankrupt Hudson & Manhattan Railroad, a dreary, rattletrap commuter line that ran under the Hudson River. If the Port Authority bailed out the railroad, New Jersey wouldn't have to. The Port Authority agreed to this, and the railroad was renamed Port Authority Trans-Hudson, or PATH.

As part of the deal, the Port Authority also became the owner of a pair of office buildings on Church Street that had been erected in 1908 over the railroad's Manhattan terminus. The buildings needed millions of dollars' worth of renovations, and the agency decided to tear them down. Someone got the idea of putting the Trade Center there, instead of on the East River, and neither Rockefeller objected. The location of the World Trade Center was determined not by any kind of master plan, or by any planners at all. It was the result of a political deal to bail out a railroad.

Austin Tobin, the head of the Port Authority, eventually took over the whole project. He wanted his own architect, and he hired Yamasaki. Tobin decided that there should be ten million square feet of office space, about five times as much as the Empire State Building. Thus the original idea of the project, revitalizing lower Manhattan, got lost. The trade center did nothing to solve the area's problems, which were a lack of easy access from most of the region and a lack of housing and cultural amenities. And it increased the supply of the one thing the area had too much of already, which was office space. When Yamasaki concluded that the best way to create all the office space Tobin wanted was to erect a pair of towers that would be the world's tallest buildings, Tobin said that was precisely what he had been hoping for.

Public-works czars like Tobin—he is less famous than Robert Moses, but, unlike Moses, he almost always got his way—are generally understood to be in short supply these days. It is inconceivable that a handful of politicians and bankers could make a deal to start one of the world's largest construction projects in the middle of New York City now, the way the Rockefellers launched the World Trade Center in the early nineteen-sixties. Austin Tobin was able to decide, pretty much on his own, that the center should take the form of the tallest skyscrapers ever built, and he carried out his plan unburdened by lawsuits, environmental-

IN THE ERA OF REDUCED EXPECTATIONS
1001 WAYS TO BREAK EVEN!
MANKOFF

impact statements, or any community opposition to speak of. (Some of the shop owners on Radio Row started a legal action to block construction, but the challenge didn't amount to much.)

Rudolph Giuliani, in his last speech before leaving office, said that he didn't want the World Trade Center site to be developed. He preferred a "soaring memorial." Giuliani was speaking as a lame duck who was going to have no official role in the rebuilding process. But, of course, Giuliani's political legacy is intimately tied to his leadership in the weeks following September 11th. If the site remained Ground Zero forever, Giuliani's central role in the epic of catastrophe would be memorialized even more concretely than it already is.

Governor Pataki, who faces reëlection this year, is in a different position. Giuliani controlled the management of Ground Zero, and the business of clearing it and of providing assistance to families of the victims, but Pataki holds most of the cards for the rebuilding process. The Port Authority can't make a move without his assent, but it has no obligation to listen to the mayor. (In fact, its relationship with the city has been troubled. Giuliani sued the Port Authority, claiming that rent it was paying to the city for Kennedy and LaGuardia Airports was inadequate. The claim is being arbitrated.) Pataki also controls the Empire State Development Corporation, the state agency that is empowered to build anything anywhere in the state and can override local zoning laws if it chooses; the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, which operates the subway lines; and the Battery Park City Authority, which built and manages Battery Park City, next door to Ground Zero. And Pataki has one more source of power: federal funds to assist in rebuilding will flow primarily through the state government, not the city.

No existing agency was equipped to coördinate everything, so Pataki created the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation, which is a subsidiary of the Empire State Development Corporation. The L.M.D.C., as first conceived, had eleven board members, seven of whom were to be appointed by the governor and four by the mayor. In the event that Mark Green, a Democrat, was elected mayor, as most people expected him to be, Pataki would retain control of the L.M.D.C. After Green lost to Michael Bloomberg, the board was expanded, without fanfare, by four more members, appointed by the mayor.

Still, by any measure, it is Pataki's game. The city, astonishingly, has no official role in the planning process, although Daniel Doctoroff, Bloomberg's deputy mayor in charge of economic development, has functioned as a kind of city ambassador to the planning effort "by sheer force of personality," as one planner put it. The decision about what to do with the World Trade Center site will be made by people whom Pataki appointed and who are, by and large, loyal to him: Charles Gargano, who is both head of the Empire State Development Corporation and vice-chairman of the Port Authority; Louis Tomson, president of the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation; Joseph Seymour, executive director of the Port Authority; and Peter Kalikow, chairman of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority. Every couple of weeks, they gather in Pataki's office on Third Avenue to give a progress report on lower Manhattan, and that is where major decisions are made. The most prominent person at Pataki's conference table, John Whitehead, is the only one who owes the Governor little.

The Lower Manhattan Development Corporation started its work last fall by setting up advisory committees that included local residents, business people, and members of victims' families. When the World Trade Center was built, almost nobody lived nearby. Now there is one residential neighborhood to the west, Battery Park City, and a very different one to the north, Tribeca. Tens of thousands of people live in converted office buildings in the financial district. More people live just a few blocks away, around the South Street Seaport, the site that the World Trade Center was originally supposed to occupy.

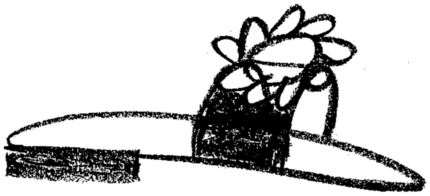
The L.M.D.C. spent months asking all these people what they thought should be built on the site, and a couple of weeks ago it issued eleven "principles for action" and a fourteen-point "blueprint for renewal." The principles seem benign: creating a memorial to the victims of the September 11th attacks, improving transit access to lower Manhattan, expanding public open space, enhancing the economic vitality of the area. But is it possible to create an appropriate memorial and also increase the area's strength as a financial center? Is improving the neighborhoods going to get in the way of developing lower Manhattan as a tourist and cultural magnet? And if you create a "comprehensive, coherent plan for transit access to lower Manhattan"—in other words, a new station for the mess of disconnected subway and other transit lines downtown—will it cost so much that it will put other transit plans, like the Second Avenue subway, at risk?

Before the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation makes any final recommendations, it will prepare a menu of options. Dozens of civic organizations have been jockeying for position in this process. In the days immediately following September 11th, Robert Yaro, the president of the Regional Plan Association, decided that no one would pay attention to these groups unless they banded together, so he organized them into something called the Civic Alliance. There is also a group of architects and planners, called New York New Visions, and a group called Rebuild Downtown Our Town, and then there is Community Board 1, the city's official advisory board for the neighborhood, which has status but no real power. Six hundred and fifty people attended a Civic Alliance meeting at the South Street Seaport in February, and five thousand are expected to convene this summer to discuss the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation's menu.

What to do with lower Manhattan is not just a matter of agreeing with John Whitehead about an ideal New York neighborhood, or with Monica Iken about a huge memorial. It is a struggle between the forces of participatory democracy and the notion of the big idea, the bold gesture. Boldness has been pretty much out of fashion in city-planning circles for a while, especially in lower Manhattan, where it is associated not only with projects like the World Trade Center but with unrealized schemes like the expressway Robert Moses wanted to run across downtown, which would have destroyed SoHo. Sometimes, though, boldness leads to great architecture, and to the sublime. You rarely get these qualities when seeking a consensus.

Architects, planners, public officials, members of victims' families, and developers speak about respecting the magnitude of the tragedy that occurred at the World Trade Center site, but they use the phrase to justify entirely different ideas about what should be built, or not built. There was even talk of recreating the twin towers. This idea has a certain sentimental appeal, as if New York were following the example of Venice, which built a replica of the campanile in St. Mark's Square after the original one collapsed in 1902. But it is surely not a possibility, not least because the safety of very tall buildings has been seriously called into doubt.

The Trade Center was unprofitable for years. Fifty floors of one tower were occupied by New York state offices, and the other tower included Port Authority headquarters. (The Trade Center never had enough tenants in international trade to be worthy of its name.) Eventually, in the boom of the nineteen-nineties, the towers attracted financial firms, and the Port Authority, which had always managed the center, decided that it might be valuable enough to be profitably leased to a private developer. But the economics of mega-skyscrapers are problematic at best. (They cost too much to build, and too much space on the lower floors is taken up by elevators to the higher ones.) There hasn't been much interest in building them in this country for more than a generation, except for proposals every so often from Donald Trump that no one takes very seriously. Only one skyscraper taller than the World Trade Center has ever been built in the United States—the Sears Tower in Chicago, which was finished in 1974. Since then, super-tall towers have gone up in places like Kuala Lumpur, Hong Kong, and Shanghai, cities that are interested mainly in the symbolic nature of such buildings.



Six weeks before the World Trade Center towers were destroyed, the Port Authority completed the process of leasing them for ninety-nine years to Larry Silverstein, the developer who had built 7 World Trade Center. Simultaneously, the retail space underneath the complex was leased to Westfield America, the U.S. division of an Australian company that is one of the world's largest operators of shopping malls. Silverstein and Westfield were given the right to rebuild the structures if they were destroyed, and Westfield has the right to expand the amount of retail space by thirty per cent. Joseph Seymour, who was appointed executive director of the Port Authority in December to succeed Neil Levin, who was killed on September 11th, told me that the Port Authority understands that it makes no sense to put the towers back, despite the terms of the lease. "They have legal rights to build what was there, but everybody realizes that's impractical," he said. "You're not going to be able to put up two hundred-and-ten-story towers. So we will be negotiating as we go forward."

Larry Silverstein is seventy-one years old. He wears white shirts with gold cufflinks, and he is relentlessly enthusiastic. He's an old-fashioned New York real-estate operator. Silverstein owns several major office buildings, but his headquarters is a somewhat dowdy-looking suite in a midtown tower that belongs to someone else. It could be the office of a prosperous dentist, except that the conference room is lined with renderings, in pseudo-Impressionist style, of several of Silverstein's buildings: 120

Broadway, 11 West Forty-second Street, 711 Fifth Avenue.

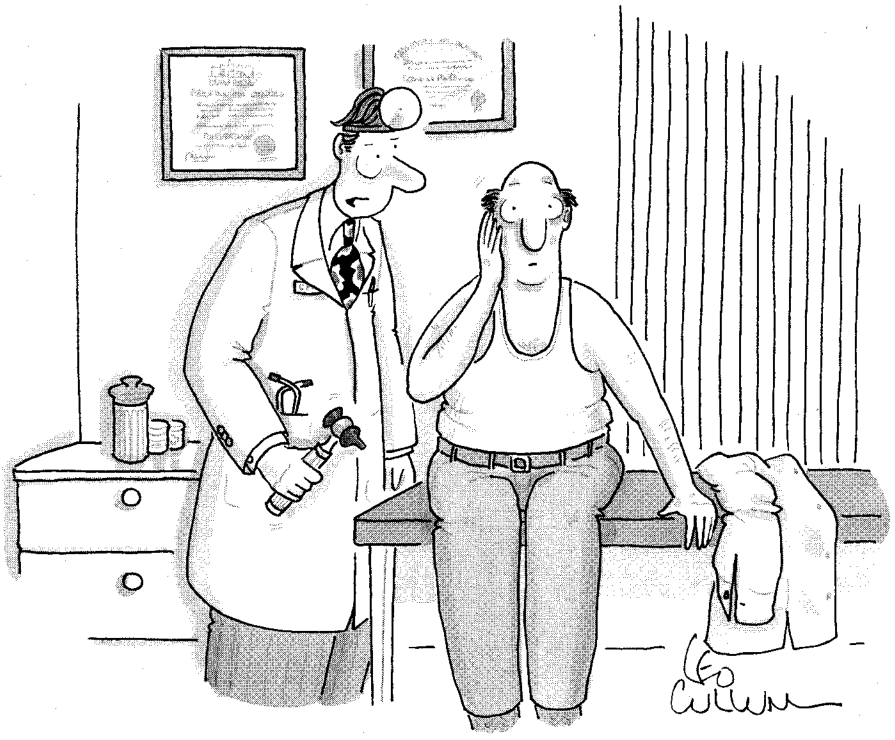
In the days following the terrorist attack, Silverstein announced grandly that he had a "moral obligation" to rebuild the Trade Center as it had been. But if people weren't comfortable in such enormous skyscrapers anymore, Silverstein said, he would be happy to accommodate them by building four fifty-story towers instead of two hundred-and-ten story ones. He commissioned his architect, David Childs, of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, to draw up plans. Childs knew the Trade Center well; his office is around the corner on Wall Street, and last summer, as soon as Silverstein's lease was signed, the developer had asked Childs to start working on a plan to make the twin towers more desirable to high-end tenants.

Silverstein's instant rebuilding plan came to be seen as a publicity grab more than a serious notion, and he soon realized that he had no power to set a timetable. Even the Port Authority was going to have to pay some attention to public opinion, and nobody was going to build anything until the process of searching the site for remains was complete. Since his other lost building, 7 World Trade Center, was not part of the original complex and had none of the symbolic weight of the twin towers, he thought that he would encounter little objection if he built on that site, and he asked David Childs to draw up plans for it. "I would start building this at 9 A.M. tomorrow if I could," he said to me when I met with him at his office on Fifth Avenue one morning last winter.

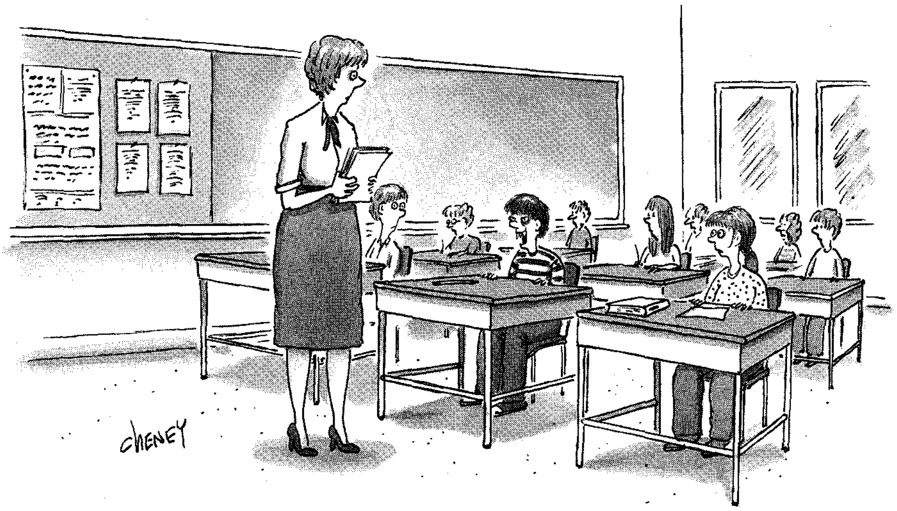
Silverstein was pleased with the drawings Childs produced, which called for a wide glass tower cantilevered over a narrower stainless-steel base. "The old No. 7 was a stone building—heavy, massive," Silverstein said. "This time around, we will build something much lighter in feel." But Childs says that he began to change his mind about his proposal for a new building. He didn't like the way the bulk of the tower projected outward, and how from a block or two uptown it would still seem to sit in the middle of the street, obstructing the view down Greenwich Street, just as the old No. 7 had. The more Childs thought about it, the less sure he became that simply opening up the bottom of the building solved the problem.

David Childs is one of the most visible architects in New York. He designed the huge AOL Time Warner headquarters now going up at Columbus Circle and the new Penn Station planned for the post office on Eighth Avenue. He is known for being attentive to the demands of corporate clients while keeping himself on the right side of the city's arbiters of design—he joined forces with Frank Gehry to design an entry in the competition for the headquarters of the New York *Times* a couple of years ago—and he was uneasy about the effect that giving in to Silverstein's demands would have on his reputation. In the middle of February, he found an unexpected ally in Alexander Garvin, the head of planning for the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation. Garvin, who teaches planning at Yale and is a member of the New York City Planning Commission, had barely started his new job with the L.M.D.C. when he went to see Silverstein about No. 7. He had a temporary office, with a borrowed phone. "I was on the subway going uptown to meet with Silverstein for the first time," he recalled recently, "and I realized that I had to think of No. 7 as a test case." He got off the train at Grand Central, walked to Silverstein's office, and told the developer and David Childs that the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation would not be likely to approve the design unless the building was reshaped to allow Greenwich Street to run through the site.

No. 7 covered two blocks at the northern edge of the original World Trade Center site. It was built over a Con Edison power station and an access ramp for trucks entering the Trade Center's underground loading docks. If the restored Greenwich Street ran through the space, as Garvin insisted, and No. 7 became smaller, the Con Edison substation would have to be smaller also. Garvin went to his boss, Louis Tomson, and asked for help in persuading Con Edison to accommodate this arrangement. Tomson, who has been close to Pataki for years, is one of those behind-the-scenes operatives who get their calls returned immediately, since everyone knows he speaks for the Governor. If Whitehead's job is to confer a kind of eminence on the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation, Tomson's job is to get things done. In this case, Garvin and Tomson had to learn something about how much space electric transformers need. It turned out that they did not all have to be placed together, but Con Edison did not, at first, volunteer this information. The ten transformers could be split into two groups of five, which Childs placed on opposite



"It's a good thing you're here. I just punctured your eardrum."



"I ate my homework."

sides of the building. That allowed room in the middle for the lobby—which in the old No. 7 had been on top of the power station—and the elevator core.

"Planning in the city is not as simple as a set of urban-design principles," Garvin said to me later, "and electric power in lower Manhattan is more important than a view corridor. But why can't we have both? If you push hard enough, you can find a way."

Long ago, Garvin devised a method for teaching his course at Yale that is based on students playing roles in games that are intended to show how planning actually takes place. One student might play an architect, another a developer, another a city official, another a citizen who is protesting the developer's project, and another a rival developer trying to make a different deal for the land. Garvin gives the students a few starting points, and then he lets the process play out, without a script. "I am now living in the middle of the most complicated game of all," he said to me. "Never in my wildest dreams did I imagine a game that would be like this one. You'd have to be an idiot to think that this can be done in a back room. This has to be a public process."

Nevertheless, Garvin has strong feelings about what should and should not happen, and he intends to fight for what he believes. "There is not going to be a plan that will come full-blown from the head of Zeus, or Garvin," he said. "But they are not going to build a suburban shopping mall, whatever they may think. And I am telling you right now that no one is building in the bed of Greenwich Street, period."

While Larry Silverstein and David Childs were struggling over the question of No. 7, Childs and Marilyn Jordan Taylor, another partner at Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, were working on a plan for the entire site at the request of Silverstein and John Zuccotti, the head of Brookfield Financial Properties, a real-estate firm that owns much of the office space adjacent to Ground Zero. Zuccotti controls most of the World Financial Center, the four-building office complex in Battery Park City that contains the headquarters of Merrill Lynch and American Express. After Silverstein, he is the landlord most affected by September 11th, and he has a particular problem with the World Financial Center. It was hard enough to get there from the rest of lower Manhattan before September 11th, but now the Financial Center is even more isolated.

I visited Childs and Taylor at their office in the old Bankers Trust Building on Wall Street. Skidmore, Owings & Merrill is the only architecture firm in the country that has managed to maintain a blue-chip reputation long after its founding partners died, and in some ways it resembles a corporate law firm as much as an architectural practice. Its design work is serious, if not always cutting-edge, but, more to the point, its partners are deeply connected to the city's power structure. Taylor was a founding member of the New York New Visions group, and after September 11th she seemed to be at every public forum, every hearing, and every committee meeting in town. She was criticized by some of her colleagues for playing both sides of the fence: she and Childs were Larry Silverstein's architects at the same time that she was helping to draft the New Visions recommendations for what Silverstein should do, and it was sometimes hard to be sure whom she was speaking for.

Childs and Taylor have come up with a plan that manages to steer a way between the slightly mannered, stage-set quality of Battery Park City and the superblock aspects of the World Trade Center design. "The site was a wound even before the Trade Center came down, like it was in Brasília or something," Childs said. "Our first thought was can we bring it back, weave it into the city?" Childs excused himself and went into another room. He brought back a set of scale drawings that showed the Trade Center site in comparison with other parts of Manhattan. It is as big as Rockefeller Center, which is neatly woven into the street grid, and bigger than all of Lincoln Center, which is not.

Childs and Taylor are proposing putting back the biggest streets that were taken away, like Greenwich Street and Fulton and Dey Streets, which run east and west, but not restoring every part of the grid. Most people would go along with that, although Silverstein's partner in the Trade Center lease, the mall developer Westfield America, made more money on the Trade Center's retail space—about nine hundred dollars a square foot—than it did on any of its suburban malls anywhere in the United States, and it has been pushing hard to build a new, enclosed mall on the site that would bridge several streets. Westfield is not a company known for paying much attention to design, and its chairman, Frank Lowy, is not particularly attuned to what you might call the cultural meaning of streets in Manhattan. Silverstein is an old-time New Yorker who can read the city's political winds, and he felt that the pressure to put back the streets was not something he wanted to resist. Westfield has been slower to catch on. The company will probably not oppose the notion of letting some streets go through the property, but it still wants as much of the retail space as possible to be indoors, as in a suburban mall.

The Childs and Taylor plan calls for some kind of major transit hub. The Regional Plan Association has suggested tying together the various intersecting subway lines and the PATH station into a new complex called Fulton Central Station, and Childs has made a version of this the centerpiece of his plan. "We need a great public room, a huge space that would be a Grand Central for the twenty-first century," he said. Childs's station would be a kind of vestibule for downtown, with shopping, restaurants, and a monumental public space. He refers to the scheme as "a compelling idea based on infrastructure," and that somewhat geeky phrase is indicative of where the planning process is now. Everyone is preoccupied with fixing the broken infrastructure, and big ideas have to address that in order to have credibility.

Larry Silverstein and John Zuccotti had also asked Alexander Cooper, of Cooper Robertson & Partners, to work on the plan for the World Trade Center site, but Cooper and Childs discovered after a few weeks that they had different ideas about what parts of the site could be built on, so the two firms ended up producing separate plans. Cooper is one of the most famous urban designers in the world—he was a co-designer of Battery Park City, and he probably did as much as anyone to shift taste in the direction of doing things like restoring Greenwich Street. His loyalty to customary ways of designing cities runs deep. He is a thin, tightly wound man in his mid-sixties with wavy gray hair and rimless glasses, and while his office, in an old industrial building in the West Forties, seems less corporate than that of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, his work is more traditional. Cooper feels that restoring street life is the first priority for any design in lower Manhattan. But he envisions a row of bulky towers along Greenwich Street on the eastern side of the site, a kind of downtown version of Sixth Avenue. "There is a certain power to this as a setting for the memorial," he said to me. "A wall of buildings around a memorial."

Cooper insists that the entire "footprint," the precise location of the twin towers, be considered off limits for a new building. The footprint is a parallelogram of roughly seven acres. "It's just right for a memorial—almost exactly the size of Bryant Park," he says. Cooper's plan includes a cultural center just south of the memorial. This would require the demolition of 90 West Street, a landmark office building by Cass Gilbert that was seriously damaged on September 11th and which preservationists want to see repaired. Childs and Taylor's plan puts a new opera house northeast of the Cass Gilbert building, which saves the landmark but cuts slightly into the south tower's footprint.

Cooper's plan is focussed heavily on transportation, which is a particular concern of his main client, John Zuccotti. The plan includes an idea that has become widely accepted, which is to put West Street underground. West Street is the ten-lane road that divides the Trade Center site from Battery Park City and the World Financial Center. It was supposed to become an interstate highway, Westway. The controversial Westway project was finally shelved in 1990, but a two-hundred-and-sixty-foot gulf still separates Battery Park City from the rest of Manhattan. Rerouting West Street underground from Chambers Street south to Battery Place would free up sixteen acres of land, and, even if some of that land were to be used for a new, narrower street for local traffic, enough usable land would be created to have a significant impact on the neighborhood. But it would cost roughly a billion and a half dollars, because water mains and power conduits would have to be relocated, and the new street constructed in the form of a watertight tunnel, since West Street is on landfill that is above the water table. The main sewer pipe for lower Manhattan runs under West Street for several blocks and would have to be moved.

The centerpiece of the Cooper plan is a new station in lower Manhattan for the Long Island Rail Road. Working with the engineering firm Parsons, Brinckerhoff, Cooper has figured out a way in which L.I.R.R. passengers could travel from Jamaica station directly to lower Manhattan on a high-speed express, using existing subway tunnels, to reach a new terminus on the Trade Center site. Zuccotti likes this because it would tie downtown directly to the suburban train network for the first time ever. The problem with the plan is that it would cost more than a billion dollars and serve relatively few passengers. High-speed ferries that took railroad passengers from Long Island City to Wall Street might be just as fast, and a lot cheaper.

Last fall, when the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation was formed, the Port Authority was an agency in trauma. It had lost its executive director and seventy-five staff members, and its most famous possession had been blown to bits. At that point, it looked as if the L.M.D.C. would be calling the shots regarding the future of the site, which pleased a lot of people in the planning and design worlds, since the Port Authority's track record as a patron of architecture has been appalling. When it is in charge of building things, we end up with the Port Authority Bus Terminal in midtown Manhattan, or Newark airport.

In the last few weeks, however, the Port Authority has asserted itself. At the end of March, Alexander Garvin asked several architectural firms to submit proposals to the L.M.D.C., which made Port Authority officials angry, since they had not been asked for advice. Garvin had to rescind the request, and the Port Authority reissued it in a more bureaucratic-sounding version. This was embarrassing, but things have calmed down. "Why would we want to go to war with the Port Authority when we could do this in partnership?" an L.M.D.C. staff member said to me. "If we went to war, they could tie this up forever." Louis Tomson, the president of the L.M.D.C., and Joseph Seymour, the executive director of the Port Authority, negotiated a "memorandum of understanding." The L.M.D.C. agreed not to attempt to unilaterally impose a plan for the World Trade Center site, and the Port Authority, which has in the past operated with lordly independence, pledged to work with the L.M.D.C. The Port Authority agreed to give up some of its land for a memorial and to include cultural facilities as well as commercial buildings on the site. The memorandum of understanding also refers to the potential reopening of a street-grid pattern, which may be the Port Authority's biggest concession, since some of its land would become public thoroughfares.

Fifteen teams of engineers and architects responded to the request for proposals, and the Port Authority and the L.M.D.C. will choose one of them as the chief consultant for the site. "We need to figure out the location of a new PATH terminal, and how to deal with West Street and the whole underground land-use pattern—a hundred different things," Alexander Garvin said. David Childs, Marilyn Jordan Taylor, and Alexander Cooper declined to compete for the job. They remain on the payrolls of the real-estate developers who commissioned them, and will be in a position to design all or some of the buildings when the time to select architects arrives, perhaps a year from now.

Whatever gets built will have to be approved by the governor of New Jersey, James McGreevey, who has the same veto power that Governor Meyner had over the World Trade Center forty years ago. McGreevey may well ask what's in it for him. He will surely support plans for a memorial, since so many of the people who died at the Trade Center on September 11th were residents of New Jersey, and he is likely to welcome plans that improve PATH service. But the Port Authority will have to come up with a plan that keeps rental income flowing across the Hudson River.

Alexander Garvin says that Childs and Taylor's plan convinced him that it was possible to accommodate multiple uses: "I've seen ten schemes already that demonstrate that you can provide revenue, put in civic functions, and have real blocks and real streets. I'm not saying it's easy. I'm just saying it's doable. If it were easy, I wouldn't have a job." None of the plans will include apartments, since the Port Authority can't, legally, build housing. But there may well be a new theatre for the New York City Opera. "If we can think of a new opera house as a kind of living memorial," Sherwin Goldman, the executive producer of the company, said to me, "then we would be very excited about going down there."

Ground Zero is in many ways like Potsdamer Platz, in Berlin, which was a void in the city's heart for nearly half a century, cleared by Allied bombs, left empty as a no man's land east of the Berlin Wall, and redeveloped only in the last decade. Potsdamer Platz was turned into a mixed-use complex of offices, housing, and shops. Much of it was designed by one of the world's great architects, Renzo Piano, who wanted to make it feel "normal," and he did, to a fault. The well-meaning dullness of Potsdamer Platz underscores a paradox that is at the heart of the dilemma of what to do with Ground Zero. The World Trade Center stood for bigness and aloofness from the urban fabric, and today we are more inclined to value smallness and connection. But we want to honor the audacity that the towers represented, and also to memorialize the catastrophe that destroyed them.

The monument issue is complicated by a tendency in the last few years to think of public memorials as "healing" places for families. But great memorials also inspire awe, and make it possible to transcend the simply personal meaning of an event. The best way to deal with the memorial is probably to have an international design competition—that is how Maya Lin's design for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington was found, and how Oklahoma City determined the design for the memorial to the victims of the 1995 bombing. It takes a while to manage such a competition, which is all to the good. The metaphors that make for powerful memorials tend to be clearer when the immediate experience of a catastrophic event recedes.

One of the more astonishing things about the aftermath of September 11th was the extent to which people perceived the skyline as an aesthetic object in itself, and the destruction of it as painful, even devastating. We do not want or need another hundred-and-ten-story skyscraper, but we could repair the broken skyline with some kind of great tower, perhaps a broadcast tower or an observation tower—a twenty-first-century Eiffel Tower for New York, which would use the technology of our time as aggressively and inventively as Eiffel used the technology of the nineteenth century. It might transcend the contradiction between the comfortable neighborhood so many people seem to want and the powerful idea that the site's painful history demands.

Ground Zero is not like the landfill that was used for Battery Park City, next door. It will always resonate with what happened on September 11th. I hope that whatever is done there incorporates shards and pieces of steel, the twisted remnants of the façade of the World Trade Center. There is a risk that in a few years the shards will seem simply like abstract sculpture, but it is a risk worth taking, for it is more likely that they will endure as noble ruins. Our history is not so long or so deep, and we have rarely had the kinds of experiences that create ruins. ♦

"You have until he rolls his eyes and looks at his watch."

FICTION

THE GREAT RETURN

BY MILAN KUNDERA

"What are you still doing here?" Her tone wasn't harsh, but it wasn't kindly, either; Sylvie was indignant.

"Where should I be?" Irena asked.

"Home!"

"You mean this isn't my home anymore?"

Of course she wasn't trying to drive Irena out of France or implying that she was an undesirable alien: "You know what I mean!"

"Yes, I do know, but aren't you forgetting that I've got my work here? My apartment? My children?"

"Look, I know Gustaf. He'll do anything to help you get back to your own country. And your daughters, let's not kid ourselves! They've already got their own lives. Good Lord, Irena, it's so fascinating, what's going on in your country! In a situation like that, things always work out."

"But Sylvie! It's not just a matter of practical things, the job, the apartment. I've been living here for twenty years now. My life is here!"

"Your people have a revolution going on!" Sylvie spoke in a tone that brooked no objection. Then she said no more. By her silence she meant to tell Irena that you don't desert when great events are happening.

"But if I go back to my country, we won't see each other anymore," said Irena, to put her friend in an uncomfortable position.

That emotional demagoguery miscarried. Sylvie's voice warmed: "Darling, I'll come see you! I promise, I promise!"

They were seated across from each other, over two empty coffee cups. Irena saw tears of emotion in Sylvie's eyes as her friend bent toward her and gripped her hand: "It will be your great return." And again: "Your great return."

Repeated, the words took on such power that, deep inside her, Irena saw them written out with capital initials: Great Return. She dropped her resistance: She was captivated by images suddenly welling up from books read long ago, from films, from her own memory and maybe from her ancestral memory: the lost son home again with his aged mother; the man returning to his beloved from whom cruel destiny had torn him away; the family homestead we all carry about within us; the rediscovered trail still marked by the forgotten footprints of childhood; Odysseus sighting his island after years of wandering; the return, the return, the great magic of the return.

The Greek word for "return" is *nostos. Algos* means "suffering." So nostalgia is the suffering caused by an unappeased yearning to return. To express that fundamental notion most Europeans can utilize a word derived from the Greek (*nostalgia, nostalgie*) as well as other words with roots in their national languages: *añoranza*, say the Spaniards; *saudade*, say the Portuguese. In each language these words have a different semantic nuance. Often they mean only the sadness caused by the impossibility of returning to one's country: a longing for country, for home. What in English is called "homesickness." Or in German: *Heimweh*. In Dutch: *heimwee*. But this reduces that great notion to just its spatial element. One of the oldest European languages, Icelandic (like English) makes a distinction between two terms: *söknuður:* nostalgia in its general sense; and *heimþrá:* longing for the homeland. Czechs have the Greek-derived *nostalgie* as well as their own noun, *stesk*, and their own verb; the most moving Czech expression of love: *Styska se mi po tobe* ("I yearn for you," "I'm nostalgic for you"; "I cannot bear the pain of your absence"). In Spanish *añoranza* comes from the verb *añorar* (to feel nostalgia), which comes from the Catalan *enyorar,* itself derived from the Latin word *ignorare* (to be unaware of, not know, not experience; to lack or miss). In that etymological light nostalgia seems something like the pain of ignorance, of not knowing. You are far away, and I don't know what has become of you. My country is far away, and I don't know what is happening there. Certain languages have problems with nostalgia: the French can only express it by the noun from the Greek root, and have no verb for it; they can say *Je m'ennuie de toi* (I miss you), but the word *s'ennuyer* is weak, cold—anyhow too light for so grave a feeling. The Germans rarely use the Greek-derived term *Nostalgie,* and tend to say *Sehnsucht* in speaking of the desire for an absent thing. But *Sehnsucht* can refer both to something that has existed and to something that has never existed (a new adventure), and therefore it does not necessarily imply the *nostos* idea; to include in *Sehnsucht* the obsession with returning would require adding a complementary phrase: *Sehnsucht nach der Vergangenheit, nach der verlorenen Kindheit, nach der ersten Liebe* (longing for the past, for lost childhood, for a first love).

The dawn of ancient Greek culture brought the birth of the Odyssey, the founding epic of nostalgia. Let us emphasize: Odysseus, the greatest adventurer of all time, is also the greatest nostalgic. He went off (not very happily) to the Trojan War and stayed for ten years. Then he tried to return to his native Ithaca, but the gods' intrigues prolonged his journey, first by three years jammed with the most uncanny happenings, then by seven more years that he spent as hostage and lover with Calypso, who in her passion for him would not let him leave her island.

In Book Five of the Odyssey, Odysseus tells Calypso: "As wise as she is, I know that Penelope cannot compare to you in stature or in beauty. . . . And yet the only wish I wish each day is to be back there, to see in my own house the day of my return!" And Homer goes on: "As Odysseus spoke, the sun sank; the dusk came: and they withdrew deep within the cavern to lie and love in each other's arms."

A far cry from the life of the poor émi-

ROBERT ANDREW PARKER

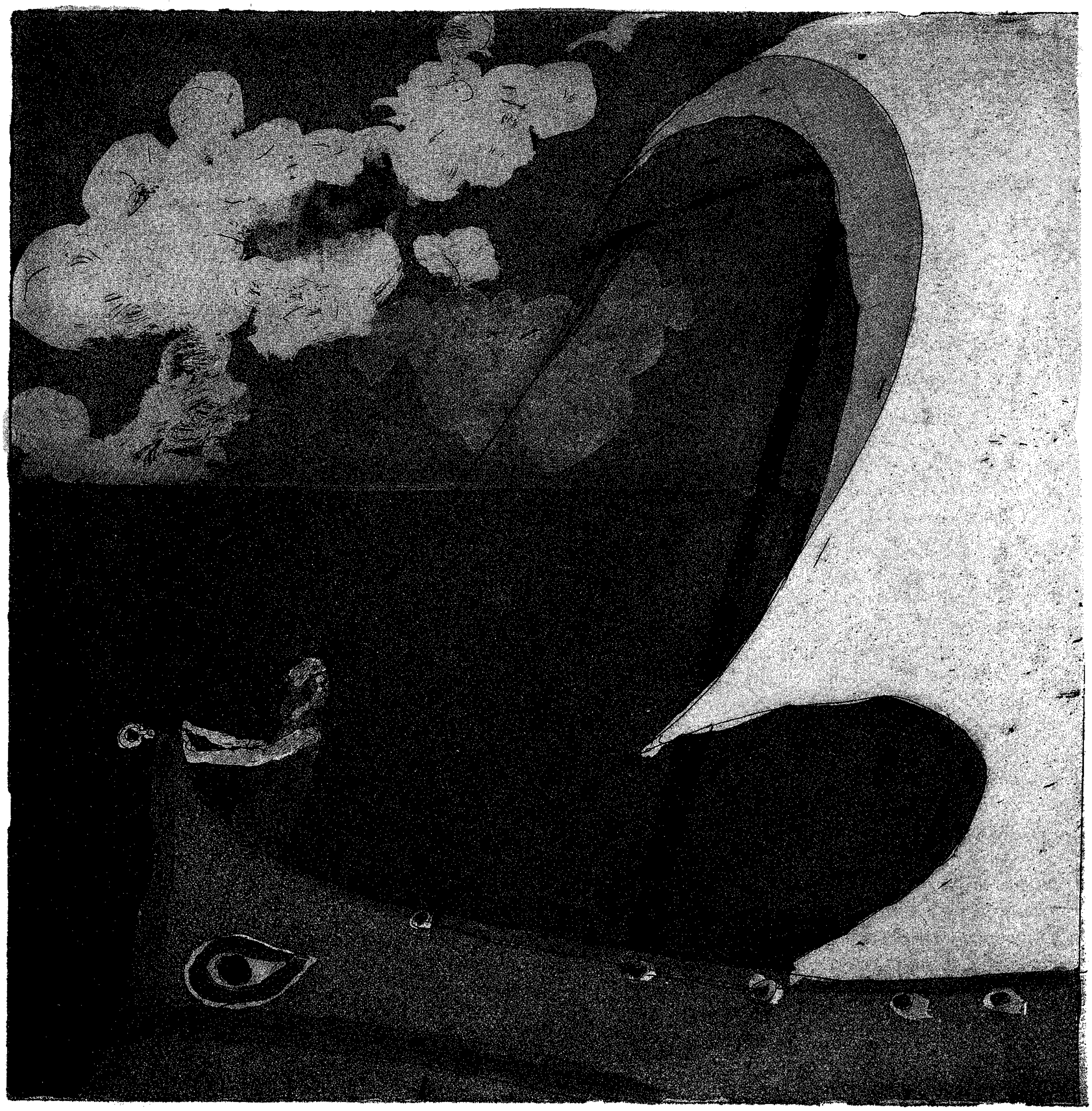
gré that Irena had been for a long while now. Odysseus lived a real *dolce vita* there in Calypso's land, a life of ease, a life of delights. And yet, between the *dolce vita* in a foreign place and the risky return to his home, he chose the return. Rather than ardent exploration of the unknown (adventure), he chose the apotheosis of the known (return). Rather than the infinite (for adventure never intends to finish), he chose the finite (for the return is a reconciliation with the finitude of life).

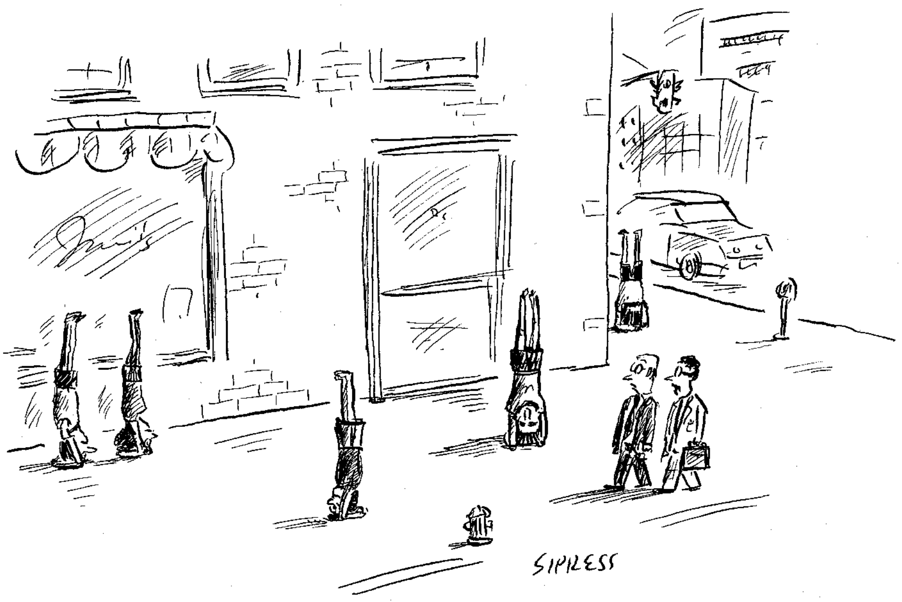
Without waking him, the Phaeacian seamen laid Odysseus, still wrapped in his bedding, near an olive tree on Ithaca's shore, and then departed. Such was his journey's end. He slept on, exhausted. When he awoke, he could not tell where he was. Then Athena wiped the mist from his eyes and it was rapture; the rapture of the Great Return; the ecstasy of the known; the music that sets the air vibrating between earth and heaven: he saw the harbor he had known since childhood, and the mountain overlooking it, and he fondled the old olive tree to confirm that it was still the same as it had been twenty years earlier.

In 1950, when Arnold Schoenberg had been in the United States for seventeen years, a journalist asked him a few treacherously innocent questions: Is it true that emigration causes artists to lose their creativity? That their inspiration withers when it no longer has the roots of their native land to nourish it?

Imagine! Five years after the Holocaust! And an American journalist won't forgive Schoenberg his lack of attachment to that chunk of earth where, before his very eyes, the horror of horrors started! But it's a lost cause. Homer glorified nostalgia with a laurel wreath and thereby laid out a moral hierarchy of emotions. Penelope stands at its summit, very high above Calypso.

Calypso, ah, Calypso! I often think about her. She loved Odysseus. They





"When did everybody stop jogging?"

• •

lived together for seven years. We do not know how long Odysseus shared Penelope's bed, but certainly not so long as that. And yet we extoll Penelope's pain and sneer at Calypso's tears.

Like blows from an axe, important dates cut deep gashes into Europe's twentieth century. The First World War, in 1914; the second; then the third—the longest one, known as "the Cold"—ending in 1989 with the disappearance of Communism. Beyond these important dates that apply to Europe as a whole, dates of secondary importance define the fates of particular nations: the year 1936, with the civil war in Spain; 1956, with Russia's invasion of Hungary; 1948, when the Yugoslavs rose up against Stalin; and 1991, when they set about slaughtering one another. The Scandinavians, the Dutch, the English are privileged to have had no important dates since 1945, which has allowed them to live a delightfully null half century.

The history of the Czechs in the twentieth century is graced with a remarkable mathematical beauty owing to the triple repetition of the number twenty. In 1918, after several centuries, they achieved their independence, and in 1938 they lost it.

In 1948 the Communist revolution, imported from Moscow, inaugurated the country's second twenty-year span; that one ended in 1968 when, enraged by the country's insolent self-emancipation, the Russians invaded with half a million soldiers.

The occupier took over in full force in autumn 1969 and then, to everyone's surprise, took off in autumn 1989—quietly, politely, as did all the Communist regimes in Europe at that time: and that was the third twenty-year span.

Our century is the only one in which historic dates have taken such a voracious grip on every single person's life. Irena's existence in France cannot be understood without first analyzing the dates. In the fifties and sixties, émigrés from the Communist countries were not much liked there; the French considered the sole true evil to be Fascism: Hitler, Mussolini, Franco, the dictators in Latin America. Only gradually, late in the sixties and into the seventies, did they come to see Communism, too, as an evil, although one of a lesser degree—say, evil No. 2. That was when, in 1969, Irena and her husband emigrated to France. They soon realized that, compared with the No. 1 evil, the catastrophe that had befallen their country was not bloody enough to impress their new friends. To make their position clear, they took to saying something like this:

"Horrible as it is, a Fascist dictatorship will disappear when its dictator does, and therefore people can keep up hope. But Communism, which is sustained by the enormous Russian civilization, is an endless tunnel for a Poland, a Hungary (not even to mention an Estonia!). Dictators are perishable, Russia is eternal. The misery of the countries we come from lies in the utter absence of hope."

This was the accurate expression of their thinking, and, to illustrate it, Irena would quote a stanza from Jan Skacel, a Czech poet of the period: he describes the sadness surrounding him; he wants to take that sadness in his hands, carry it far off somewhere, and build himself a house out of it, he wants to lock himself inside that house for three hundred years and for three hundred years not open the door, not open the door to anyone!

Three hundred years? Skacel wrote those lines in the nineteen-seventies and he died in 1989, in autumn, only days before those three hundred years of sadness he saw stretching ahead crumbled in just a few days: people filled the Prague streets, and the key rings jangling in their lifted hands rang in the coming of a new age.

Did Skacel have it wrong when he spoke of three hundred years? Of course he did. All predictions are wrong, that's one of the few certainties granted to mankind. But, though predictions may be wrong, they are right about the people who voice them, not about their future but about their experience of the present moment. During what I call their first twenty-year span (between 1918 and 1938), the Czechs believed that their republic had all infinity ahead of it. They had it wrong, but precisely because they were wrong they lived those years in a state of joy that led their arts to flourish as never before.

After the Russian invasion, since they had no inkling of Communism's eventual end, they again believed that they were inhabiting an infinity, and it was not the pain of their current life but the vacuity of the future that sucked dry their energies, stifled their courage, and made that third twenty-year span so craven, so wretched.

In 1921, convinced that with his twelve-tone system he had opened far-reaching prospects to musical history, Arnold Schoenberg declared that, thanks to him, predominance (he didn't say "glory," he said *Vorherrschaft,* "predominance") was guaranteed to German music (he, a Viennese, didn't say "Austrian," he said "German") for the next hundred years (I quote him exactly, he spoke of "a hundred years"). A dozen years after that prophecy, in 1933, he was forced, as a Jew, to leave Germany (the very Germany for which he sought to guarantee *Vorherrschaft*), as was all music based on his twelve-tone system (which was condemned as incomprehensible, élitist, cosmopolitan, and hostile to the German spirit).

Schoenberg's prognosis, however mistaken, is nonetheless indispensable for anyone seeking to understand the meaning of his work, which he considered not destructive, hermetic, cosmopolitan, individualistic, difficult, or abstract but, rather, deeply rooted in "German soil" (yes, he spoke of "German soil"); Schoenberg believed he was writing not a fascinating epilogue to the history of Europe's great music (which is how I tend to see his work) but the prologue to a glorious future stretching farther than the eye could see.

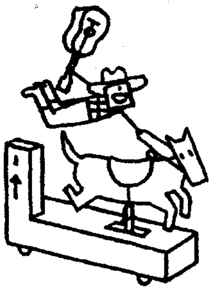
From the very first weeks after emigrating, Irena began to have strange dreams: she is in an airplane that switches direction and lands at an unknown airport; uniformed men with guns are waiting for her at the foot of the gangway; in a cold sweat, she recognizes the Czech police. Another time she is strolling in a small French city when she sees an odd group of women, each holding a beer mug, run toward her, call to her in Czech, laugh with fake cordiality, and in terror Irena realizes that she is in Prague. She cries out, she wakes up.

Martin, her husband, was having the same dreams. Every morning they would talk about the horror of that return to their native land. Then, in the course of a conversation with a Polish friend, an émigré herself, Irena realized that all émigrés had those dreams, every one, without exception; at first she was moved by that nighttime fraternity of people unknown to one another, then somewhat irritated: how could the very private experience of a dream be a collective event? What was unique about her soul, then? But that's enough of questions that have no answers! One thing was certain: on any given night, thousands of émigrés were all dreaming the same dream in numberless variants. The emigration-dream: one of the strangest phenomena of the second half of the twentieth century.

These dream-nightmares seemed to her all the more mysterious in that she was afflicted simultaneously with an uncontrollable nostalgia and another, completely opposite, experience: landscapes from her country kept appearing to her by day. No, this was not daydreaming, lengthy and conscious, willed; it was something else entirely: visions of landscapes would blink on in her head unexpectedly, abruptly, swiftly, and go out instantly. She would be talking to her boss and all at once, like a flash of lightning, she'd see a path through a field. She would be jostled on the Métro and suddenly a narrow lane in some leafy Prague neighborhood would rise up before her for a split second. All day long these fleeting images would visit her to assuage the longing for her lost Bohemia.

The same moviemaker of the subconscious who, by day, was sending her bits of the home landscape as images of happiness by night would set up terrifying returns to that same land. The day was lit with the beauty of the land forsaken, the night by the horror of returning to it. The day would show her the paradise she had lost; the night, the hell she had fled.

Loyal to the tradition of the French Revolution, the Communist countries hurled anathema at emigration, deemed to be the most odious treason. Everyone who stayed abroad was convicted in absentia in their home country, and their compatriots did not dare have any contact with them. Still, as time passed, the severity of the anathema weakened, and a few years before 1989 Irena's mother, an inoffensive pensioner recently widowed, was granted an exit visa for a weeklong trip to Italy through the government travel agency; the following year she decided to spend five days in Paris and secretly see her daughter. Touched, and full of pity for a mother she imagined had grown elderly, Irena booked her a hotel room and sacrificed some vacation time so she could be with her the whole while.



"You don't look too bad," the mother said when they first met. Then, laughing, she added: "Neither do I, actually. When the border policeman looked at my passport, he said: 'This is a false passport, Madame! This is not your date of birth!'" Instantly Irena recognized her mother as the person she had always known, and she had the sense that nothing had changed in those nearly twenty years. The pity she'd felt for an elderly mother evaporated. Daughter and mother faced off like two beings outside time, like two timeless essences.

But wasn't it awful of the daughter not to be delighted at the presence of her mother who, after seventeen years, had come to see her? Irena mustered all her rationality, all her moral discipline, to behave like a devoted daughter. She took her mother to dinner at the restaurant up in the Eiffel Tower; she took her on a tour boat to show her Paris from the Seine; and because the mother wanted to see art she took her to the Musée Picasso. In the second gallery the mother stopped short: "I've got a friend who's a painter. She gave me two pictures as a gift. You can't imagine how beautiful they are!" In the third gallery, she declared she wanted to see the Impressionists: "There's a permanent exhibition at the Jeu de Paume." "That's gone now," Irena said. "The Impressionists aren't at the Jeu de Paume anymore." "No, no," said the mother. "They are, they're at the Jeu de Paume. I know they are, and I'm not leaving Paris without seeing van Gogh!" Irena took her instead to the Musée Rodin. Standing in front of one of his statues, the mother sighed dreamily: "In Florence I saw Michelangelo's 'David'! I was just speechless!" "Listen," Irena exploded. "You're here in Paris with me, and I'm showing you Rodin. Rodin! You hear? Rodin! You've never seen him, so why are you thinking about Michelangelo when you're right in front of Rodin?"

The question was fair: why, when she is reunited with her daughter after years, does the mother take no interest in what the younger woman is showing her and telling her? Why does Michelangelo, whom she saw with a group of Czech tourists, captivate her more than Rodin? And why, through all these five days, does she not ask her daughter a single question? Not one question about her life, and none about France, either—about its cuisine, its literature, its cheeses, its wines, its politics, its theatres, its films, its cars, its pianists, its cellists, its athletes?

Instead she talks constantly about goings on in Prague, about Irena's half brother (by her second husband, the one who just died), about other people, some Irena remembers and some she's never heard of. A couple of times she's tried to inject a remark about her life in France, but her words never penetrate the chinkless barrier of the mother's discourse.

That's how it was ever since she was a child: the mother fussed over her son as if he were a little girl, but was manfully Spartan toward her daughter. Do I mean that she did not love her daughter? Perhaps because of Irena's father, her first husband, whom she had despised? We won't indulge in that sort of cheap psychologizing. Her behavior was very well intentioned: overflowing with energy and health herself, she worried about her daughter's low vitality; her rough style was meant to rid the daughter of her hypersensitivity, rather like an athletic father who throws his fearful child into the swimming pool in the belief that this is the best way to teach him to swim.

And yet she was fully aware that her mere presence flattened her daughter, and I won't deny that she took a secret pleasure in her own physical superiority. So? What was she supposed to do? Vanish into thin air in the name of maternal love? She was growing inexorably older, and the sense of her strength as reflected in Irena's reaction had a rejuvenating effect on her. When she saw her daughter cowed and diminished at her side, she would prolong the occasions of her demolishing supremacy as long as possible. With sadistic zest, she would pretend to take Irena's fragility for indifference, laziness, indolence, and scolded her for it.

Irena had always felt less pretty and less intelligent in her mother's presence. How often had she run to the mirror for reassurance that she wasn't ugly, didn't look like an idiot . . . ? Oh, all that was so far away, almost forgotten. But, during her mother's five-day stay in Paris, that feeling of inferiority, of weakness, of dependency came over her again.

The night before her mother left, Irena introduced her to her companion, Gustaf, a Swede. The three of them had dinner in a restaurant, and the mother, who spoke not a word of French, managed valiantly with English. Gustaf was delighted: with his mistress, Irena, he spoke only French, and he was tired of that language, which he considered pretentious and not very practical. That evening, Irena did not talk much: she looked on in surprise as her mother displayed an unexpected capacity for interest in another person; with just her thirty badly pronounced English words she overwhelmed Gustaf with questions about his life, his business, his views, and she impressed him.

The next day, her mother left. Back from the airport, and back to peace in her top-floor apartment, Irena went to the window to savor the freedom of solitude. She gazed for a long while out at the rooftops, the array of chimneys with all their different fantastical shapes—the Parisian flora that had long ago supplanted the green of Czech gardens—and she realized how happy she was in this city. She had always taken it as a given that emigrating was a misfortune. But now she wonders, wasn't it instead an illusion of misfortune, an illusion suggested by the way people perceive an émigré? Wasn't she interpreting her own life according to the operating instructions other people had handed her? And she thought that, even though it had been imposed from the outside and against her will, her emigration was perhaps, without her knowing it, the best outcome for her life. The implacable forces of history that had attacked her freedom had set her free.

So she was a little disconcerted a few weeks later, when Gustaf proudly announced some good news: he had proposed that his firm open a Prague office. Since the Communist country had limited commercial appeal, the office would be a modest one; still, he would have occasion to spend time there now and then.

"I'm thrilled to have a connection with your city," he said.

Rather than delight, she felt some sort of vague threat.

"My city? Prague isn't my city anymore," she answered.

"What?" He bristled.

She had never disguised her views from him, so it was certainly possible for him to know her well, and yet he was seeing her exactly the way everyone else saw her: *a young woman in pain, banished from her country.* He himself comes from a Swedish town he wholeheartedly detests, and in which he refuses to set foot. But in his case it's taken for granted. Because everyone applauds him as *a nice, very cosmopolitan Scandinavian who's already forgotten all about the place he comes from.* Both of them are pigeonholed, labelled, and they will be judged by how true they are to their labels (of course, that and that alone is what's emphatically called "being true to oneself").

"What are you saying!" he protested. "Then what is your city?"

"Paris! This is where I met you, where I live with you."

As if he hadn't heard her, he stroked her hand: "Accept this as my gift to you. You can't go there. So I'll be your link to your lost country. I'm happy to do it!"

She did not doubt his goodness; she thanked him; nonetheless she added, her tone even: "But please do understand that I don't need you to be my link with anything at all. I'm happy with you, cut off from everything and everyone."

He responded just as soberly: "I understand what you're saying. And don't worry that I expect to involve myself in your old life there. The only one I'll see of the people you used to know will be your mother."

What could she say? That her mother is exactly the person she doesn't want him spending time with? How could she tell him that—this man who remembers his own dead mother with such love?

"I admire your mother. What vitality!"

Irena has no doubt of that. Everyone admires her mother for her vitality. How can she explain to Gustaf that within the magic circle of maternal energy, Irena has never managed to rule over her own life? How can she explain that the constant proximity of the mother would throw her back, into her weaknesses, her immaturity? Oh, this insane idea of Gustaf's, wanting to connect with Prague!

Only when she was alone, back in the house, did she calm down, telling herself: "The police barrier between the

Communist countries and the West is pretty solid, thank God. I don't have to worry that Gustaf's contacts with Prague could be any threat to me."

What? What was that she just said to herself? "The police barrier is pretty solid, thank God"? Did she really say, "Thank God"? Did she—an émigré everyone pities for losing her homeland—did she actually say, "Thank God"?

Gustaf had come to know Martin by chance, over a business negotiation. He met Irena much later, when she was already widowed. They liked each other, but they were shy. Whereupon the husband hurried in from the beyond to help them along by being a ready subject for conversation. When Gustaf learned from Irena that Martin had been born the same year he was, he heard the collapse of the wall that separated him from this much younger woman, and he felt a grateful affection for the dead man whose age encouraged him to court the man's beautiful wife.

Gustaf worshipped his deceased mother; he tolerated (without pleasure) two grown daughters; he was fleeing his wife. He would very much have liked to divorce if it could be done amicably. Since that was impossible, he did his best to stay away from Sweden. Like him, Irena had two daughters, who were also on the brink of living on their own. For the elder one Gustaf bought a studio apartment, and he arranged to send the younger one to a boarding school in England, so that Irena, living alone, could take him in.

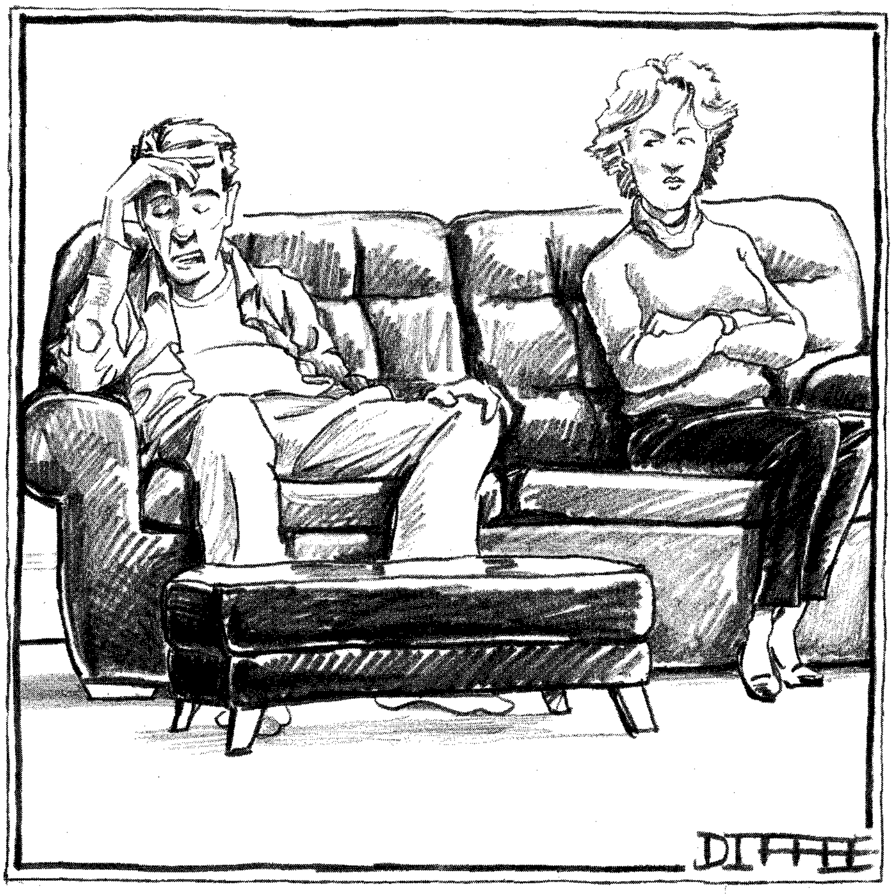
She was dazzled by his goodness, which everyone saw as the main trait, the most striking, almost unbelievable trait of his character. He charmed women by it; they understood only too late that the goodness was less a weapon of seduction than a weapon of defense. His mother's darling boy, he was incapable of living on his own without women's caretaking. But he tolerated all the less well their demands, their arguments, their tears, and even their too present, too expansive bodies. To keep them around and at the same time avoid them, he would lob great artillery shells of goodness at them. Under cover of the smoke he would beat his retreat.

In the face of his goodness, Irena was at first unsettled, confused: Why was he so kind, so generous, so undemanding? How could she repay him? The only recompense she could figure out was to display her desire. She would set her wide-eyed gaze on him, a gaze that demanded some immense, intoxicating, nameless thing.

Her desire; the sad story of her desire. She had never known sexual pleasure before she met Martin. Then she bore a child, moved from Prague to France with a second daughter in her belly, and soon after that Martin was dead. She went through some long, hard years then, forced to take on any sort of work—cleaning houses, caring for a rich paraplegic—and it was a big triumph just to get the chance to do translations from Russian to French (she was glad to have studied languages seriously in Prague). The years rolled by, and on posters, on billboards, on the covers of magazines displayed on the newsstands, women stripped and couples kissed and men strutted in underpants, while amid the universal orgy her own body roamed the streets neglected and invisible.

So meeting Gustaf had been a festival. After such a long time, her body, her face were finally being seen and appreciated, and, because they were pleasing, a man had invited her to share life with him. It was in the midst of that enchantment that her mother turned up in Paris. But at perhaps that same time, or very slightly later, she began to harbor a vague suspicion that her body had not entirely escaped the fate it was apparently destined for all along. That Gustaf, who was fleeing his wife, his women, was looking to her not for an adventure, a new youth, a freedom of the senses, but for a rest. Let's not exaggerate; her body did not go untouched; but her suspicion grew that it was being touched less than it deserved.

Europe's Communism burned out exactly two hundred years after the French Revolution took fire. For Irena's Parisian friend Sylvie, that was a coincidence loaded with meaning. But with what meaning? What name could be given to the triumphal arch spanning those two majestic dates? *The Arch of the Two Greatest European Revolutions*? Or



"I have a fear of commitment to you."

The Arch Connecting the Greatest Revolution with the Final Restoration? For the sake of avoiding ideological argument, I propose that we adopt a more modest interpretation: The first date gave birth to a great European character, the Émigré (either the Great Traitor or the Great Victim, according to one's outlook); the second date took the Émigré off the set of the History of the Europeans; with that, the great moviemaker of the collective unconscious finished off one of his most original productions, the emigration-dream show. And it was at this moment that Irena first returned to Prague for a few days.

When she set out it was very cold, and then after she had been there three days summer arrived suddenly, unexpectedly, unseasonably. Her thick suit became unwearable. Having packed nothing for warmer weather, she went to a shop to buy a summer dress. The country was not yet overflowing with merchandise from the West, and all she found was the same fabrics, the same colors, the same styles she had known during the Communist period. She tried on two or three dresses and was uncomfortable. Hard to say why: they weren't ugly, their cut wasn't bad, but they reminded her of her distant past, the sartorial austerity of her youth; they looked naïve, provincial, inelegant, fit for a country schoolteacher. But she was in a hurry. Why, after all, shouldn't she look like a country schoolteacher for a few days? She bought the dress for a ridiculous price, kept it on, and with her winter suit in the bag stepped out into the hot street.

Then, walking by a big department store, she unexpectedly passed a wall covered with an enormous mirror and she was stunned: the person she saw was not she, it was somebody else or, when she looked longer at herself in her new dress, it was she but she living a different life, the life she would have lived if she had stayed in Prague. This woman was not dislikable, she was even touching, but a little too touching, touching to the point of tears, pitiable, poor, weak, downtrodden.

She was gripped by the same panic she used to feel in her emigration-dreams: through the magical power of a dress she could see herself imprisoned in a life she did not want and would never again be able to leave. As if long ago, at the start of her adult life, she had had a choice among several possible lives and had ended up choosing the one that took her to France. And as if those other lives, rejected and abandoned, were still lying in wait and jealously watching for her from their lairs. One of them had now snatched Irena and bound her into her new dress as if into a straitjacket.

Frightened, she hurried home to Gustaf's apartment (his company had bought a house in central Prague and he kept a pied-à-terre up under the eaves) and changed her clothes. Back in her winter suit now, she looked out the window. The sky was cloudy, and the trees bent under the wind. It had been hot for only a few hours. A few hours of heat to play a nightmare trick on her, to call up the horror of the return.

(Was it a dream? Her final emigration-dream? No, no, the whole thing today had been real. Still, she had the sense that the snares she knew from those early dreams were not done with—that they were still present, still at the ready, on the lookout for her.)

DEPENDING ON THE WIND

1.
A score of years ago I felled a hundred pines to build a house.

Two stories, seven rooms in all.
I built my love a home.
Our
daughter was in orbit in the womb.
Mountains spun off like the arm
of a galaxy into the emptiness our windows framed.
"What a
view!" our friends exclaimed, and "Sunsets to die for every single
night!"

2.
Vertigo of solitude, distillate of loneliness for blood, my wife
untrue, my daughter flown, I, like a widower or worse, move
among the rooms I made.
Where once I was not alone, now each
closed door is panic, and spaces grow immense with memory, like
shadows at dusk: abandonment's avatar, grief's cynosure.
Gone
that arrangement of allegiances called *family* we never really know
before it ends.
Like love itself, it isn't true till then.
I have no
family now but remembrances of tiny joys, tinier dramas we used
to call *our life*, like pollen over everything: brightly colored
clothespins on the line, a cross-shaped coral earring whose match is
lost, books of fairy tales we read aloud at night.
I must be dumb as a
gunnysack of hammers.
Wind still blows through open windows
like it always used to do.
What did I love that made me believe it
would last?

—*James Galvin*

During the twenty years of Odysseus' absence, the people of Ithaca retained many recollections of him but never felt nostalgia for him. Whereas

Odysseus did suffer nostalgia, and remembered almost nothing.

We can comprehend this curious contradiction if we realize that for memory to function well, it needs constant practice: if recollections are not evoked again and again, in conversations with friends, they go. Émigrés gathered together in compatriot colonies keep retelling to the point of nausea the same stories, which thereby become unforgettable. But people who do not spend time with their compatriots, like Irena or Odysseus, are inevitably stricken with amnesia. The stronger their nostalgia, the emptier of recollections it becomes. The more Odysseus languished, the more he forgot. For nostalgia does not heighten memory's activity, it does not awaken recollections; it suffices unto itself, unto its own feelings, so fully absorbed is it by its suffering and nothing else.

After killing off the brazen fellows who hoped to marry Penelope and rule Ithaca, Odysseus was obliged to live with people he knew nothing about. To flatter him they would go over and over everything they could recall about him before he left for the war. And, because they believed that all he was interested in was his Ithaca (how could they think otherwise, since he had journeyed over the immensity of the seas to get back to the place?), they nattered on about things that had happened during his absence, eager to answer any question he might have. Nothing bored him more. He was waiting for just one thing: for them finally to say, "Tell us!" And that is the one thing they never said.

For twenty years he had thought about nothing but his return. But once he was back he was amazed to realize that his life, the very essence of his life, its center, its treasure, lay outside Ithaca, in the twenty years of his wanderings. And this treasure he had lost, and could retrieve only by telling about it.

After leaving Calypso, during his return journey, he was shipwrecked in Phaeacia, whose king welcomed him to his court. There he was a foreigner, a mysterious stranger. A stranger gets asked, "Who are you? Where do you come from? Tell us!" and he had told. For four long books of the Odyssey he had retraced in detail his adventures before the dazzled Phaeacians. But in Ithaca he was not a stranger, he was one of their own, so it never occurred to anyone to say, "Tell us!"

She leafed through her old address books, lingering over half-forgotten names; then she reserved a room at a restaurant. On a long table against the wall, alongside platters of petits fours, twelve bottles stood in neat rows. In Bohemia people don't drink good wine, and there is no custom of laying down vintage bottlings. She bought this old Bordeaux with all the greater pleasure: to surprise her guests, to make a party for them, to regain their friendship.

She came close to ruining it all. Awkwardly her friends eye the bottles until one of them, full of confidence and proud of her plain-and-simple style, declares her preference for beer. Emboldened anew by this outspokenness, the others go along and the beer lover calls the waiter.

Irena blames herself for having committed an act of poor taste with her case of Bordeaux, for thoughtlessly underscoring everything that stands between them: her long absence from the country, her foreigner's ways, her wealth. She blames herself all the more because the gathering is so important for her: she hopes finally to figure out whether she can live here, feel at home, have friends. So she determines not to let that bit of boorishness bother her, she is even willing to see it as a pleasing directness; after all, this beer her guests are so loyal to, isn't beer the holy libation of sincerity? the potion that dispels all hypocrisy, any charade of fine manners? the drink that does nothing worse than incite its fans to urinate in all innocence, to gain weight in all frankness? And in fact the women in the room are fullheartedly fat; they talk incessantly, overflow with good advice, and sing the praises of Gustaf, whose existence they all know about.

Meanwhile, the waiter appears in the doorway with ten half-litre mugs of beer, five in each hand, a great athletic feat that provokes applause and laughter. They all lift their mugs and toast: "Health to Irena! Health to the daughter who's returned!"

Irena takes a small sip of beer, thinking: And suppose it were Gustaf offering them the wine? Would they have turned it down? Certainly not. Rejecting the wine

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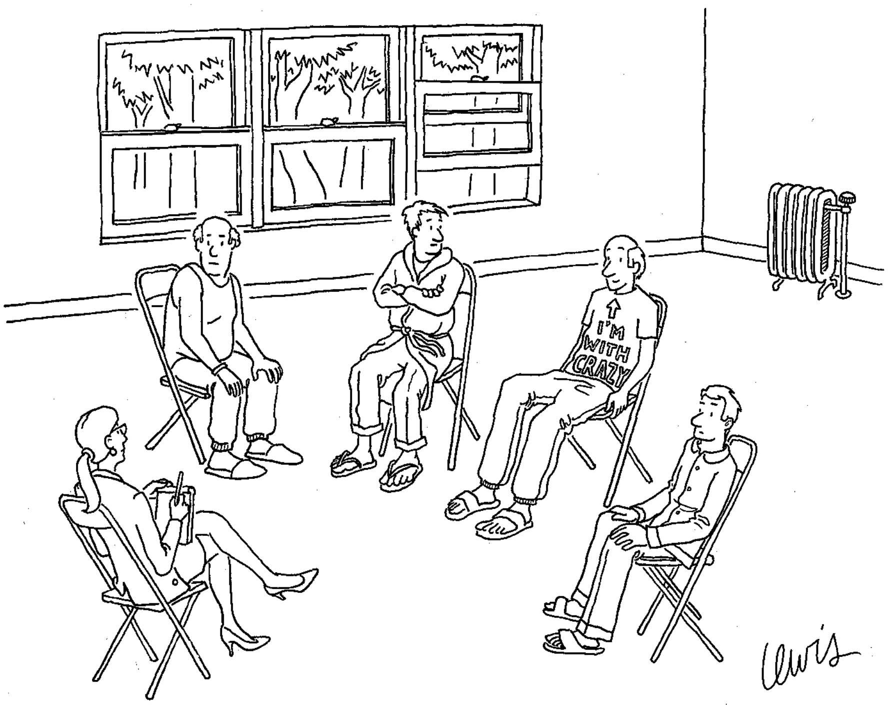

was rejecting her. Her as the person she is now, coming back after so many years.

And that was exactly her gamble: that they'd accept her as the person she is now, coming back. She left here as a naïve young woman, and she has come back mature, with a life behind her, a difficult life that she's proud of. She means to do all she can to get them to accept her with her experiences of the past twenty years, with her convictions, her ideas; it'll be double or nothing: either she succeeds in being among them as the person she has become, or else she won't stay. She arranged this gathering as the starting point in her campaign. They can drink beer if they insist, that doesn't faze her; what matters to her is choosing the topic of conversation herself and being heard.

But time is passing, the women are all talking at once, and it is nearly impossible to have a conversation, much less to impose its subject. She tries delicately to take up topics they raise and lead them toward what she wants to tell them, but she fails: as soon as her remarks move away from their own concerns, no one listens.

The waiter has already brought the second round of beer; her first mug is still standing on the table with its foam collapsed as if disgraced alongside the exuberant foam of the fresh mug. Irena faults herself for having lost her taste for beer; in France she learned to savor a drink by small mouthfuls, and is no longer used to bolting great quantities of liquid as beer-loving requires. She raises the mug to her lips and forces herself to take two, three swigs in a row. Just then one woman—the oldest of them all, about sixty—gently puts her hand to Irena's lips and wipes away the flecks of foam left there.

"Don't force yourself," she tells her. "Suppose we have a little wine ourselves? It would be idiotic to pass up such a good wine," and she asks the waiter to open one of the bottles still standing untouched on the long table.

Milada had been a colleague of Martin's, working at the same institute. Irena had recognized her when she first appeared at the door of the room, but only now, each of them with a wineglass in hand, is she able to talk to her. She looks at her: Milada still has the same shape face (round), the same dark hair, the same hair style (also round, covering the ears and falling to below the chin). She appears not to have changed; however, when she begins to speak her face is abruptly transformed: her skin creases and creases again, her upper lip shows fine vertical lines, while wrinkles on her cheeks and chin shift rapidly with every expression. Irena thinks Milada certainly must not realize this: people don't talk to themselves in front of a mirror; she would see her own face only when it is at rest, with the skin nearly smooth; every mirror in the world would have her believe that she is still beautiful.

As she savors the wine, Milada says (and instantly, on her lovely face, the wrinkles spring forth and start to dance): "It's not easy, returning, is it?"

"They can't understand that we left without the slightest hope of coming back. We did our best to drop anchor where we were. Do you know Skacel?"

"The poet?"

"There's a stanza where he talks about his sadness; he says he wants to build a house out of it and lock himself inside for three hundred years. Three hundred years. We all saw a three-hundred-year-long tunnel stretching ahead of us."

"Sure, we did too, here."

"So then why isn't anyone willing to acknowledge that?"

"Because people revise their feelings if the feelings were wrong. If history has disproved them."

"And then, too: everybody thinks we left to get ourselves an easy life. They don't know how hard it is to carve out a little place for yourself in a foreign world. Can you imagine—leaving your country with a baby and with another one in your belly. Losing your husband. Raising your two daughters with no money . . ."

She falls silent, and Milada says: "It makes no sense to tell them all that. Even until just lately, everybody was arguing about who had the hardest time under the old regime. Everybody wanted to be acknowledged as a victim. But those suffering contests are over now. These days people brag about success, not about suffering. So, if they're prepared to respect you now, it's not for the hard life you've had, it's because they see you've got yourself a rich man!"

They've been talking for a long time in a corner when the other women approach and collect around them. As if to make up for not paying enough attention to their hostess, they are garrulous (a beer high makes people more noisy and good-humored than a wine high) and affectionate. The woman who earlier had demanded beer cries: "I've really got to taste your wine!" and she calls the waiter, who opens more bottles and fills glasses.

Irena is gripped by a sudden vision: beer mugs in hand and laughing noisily, a bunch of women rush up to her, she makes out Czech words, and understands, horrified, that she is not in France, that she is in Prague and she is doomed. Oh, yes—it's one of her old emigration-dreams, and she quickly banishes the memory of it: in fact the women around her aren't drinking beer now, they're raising wineglasses, and again they're toasting the daughter's return; then one of them, beaming, says to her: "You remember? I wrote you that it was high time, high time you came back!"

Who is that woman? The whole evening she's been talking about her husband's sickness, lingering excitedly over all the morbid details. Finally Irena recognizes her: the high-school classmate who wrote her the very week Communism fell: "Oh, my dear, we're old already! It's high time you came back!" Again, now, she repeats that line, and in her thickened face a broad grin reveals dentures.

The other women assail her with questions: "Irena, remember when . . . ?" And "You know what happened back then with . . . ?" "Oh, no, really, you must remember him!" "That guy with the big ears, you always made fun of him!" "No, you can't possibly have forgotten him! You're all he talks about!"

Until that moment they have shown no interest in what she was trying to tell them. What is the meaning of this sudden onslaught? What is it they want to find out, these women who wouldn't listen to anything before? She soon sees that their questions are of a particular kind: questions to check whether she knows what they know, whether she remembers what they remember. This has a strange effect on her, one that will stay with her:

Earlier, by their total uninterest in her experience abroad, they amputated twenty years from her life. Now, with this interrogation, they are trying to stitch her old past onto her present life. As if they were amputating her forearm and attaching the hand directly to the elbow; as if they were amputating her calves and joining her feet to her knees.

Transfixed by that image, she can give no answer to their questions; anyhow, the women are not expecting one, and, drunker and drunker, they fall back into their chatter, which leaves Irena out. She watches their mouths opening all at the same time, mouths moving and emitting words and constantly bursting into laughter (a mystery: how is it that women not listening to one another can laugh at what the others are saying?). None of them is talking to Irena anymore, but they're all beaming with good humor, the woman who started off by ordering beer begins singing, the others do the same, and even when the party's over they go on singing out in the street.

In bed Irena thinks back over her party; once again her old emigration-dream comes back and she sees herself surrounded by women, noisy and hearty, raising their beer mugs. In the dream they were working for the secret police with orders to entrap her. But for whom were tonight's women working? "It's high time you came back," said her old classmate with the macabre dentures. As an emissary from the graveyards (the graveyards of the homeland), her job was to call Irena back into line: to warn her that time is short and that life is supposed to finish up where it started.

Then her thoughts turn to Milada, who was so maternally friendly; she made it clear that nobody is interested anymore in Irena's odyssey, and Irena realizes that, actually, neither is Milada. But how can she blame her? Why should Milada be interested in something that has no connection at all with her own life? It would be just a polite charade, and Irena is glad that Milada was so kindly, with no charade.

Her last thought before sleeping is about Sylvie. It's already so long since she's seen her! She misses her! Irena would love to take her out to their Paris bistro and tell her all about her recent trip to Bohemia. Get her to understand how hard it is to return home. Actually you were the first, she imagines telling her, the first person who used those words: the Great Return. And you know something, Sylvie—now I understand: I could go back and live with them, but there'd be a condition: I'd have to lay my whole life with you, with all of you, with the French, solemnly on the altar of the homeland and set fire to it. Twenty years of my life spent abroad would go up in smoke, in a sacrificial ceremony. And the women would sing and dance with me around the fire, with beer mugs raised high in their hands. That's the price I'd have to pay to be pardoned. To be accepted. To become one of them again. ♦

(Translated, from the French, by Linda Asher.)

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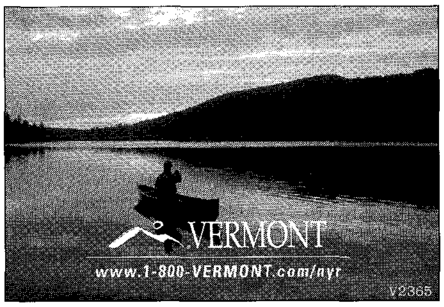

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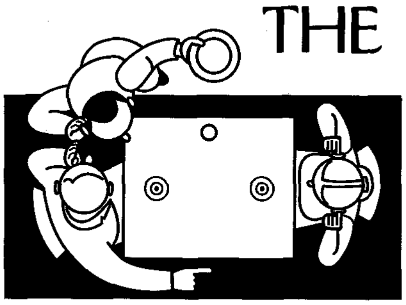
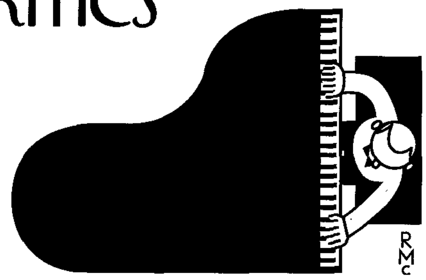




BOOKS

THE QUEEN'S HEART

In time for her Golden Jubilee, two biographies of Elizabeth II.

BY MARTIN AMIS

Word of the car crash reached Balmoral Castle, in Scotland, at one o'clock in the morning of August 31, 1997. Word of the death came through at four. Prince Charles was in residence, with his sons; the Queen advised him not to wake them (they would need all their strength), adding, "We must get the radios out of their rooms." Charles broke the news just after seven. Prince Harry, then twelve, couldn't quite take it in. Was everyone sure? he asked; would somebody check? The boys were asked if they would like to accompany the family to church. (It was Sunday.) Prince William, then fifteen, wanted to attend—so he could "talk to Mummy."

"The world's going to go completely mad," Charles said, presciently, when he heard. By the following Thursday, the Royal Family was facing the strangest crisis in its history. Certainly, King Egbert (802-39) would not have known what to make of it; and neither did Queen Elizabeth II (1952-). "We don't have protocol here," an eminent courtier once drawled, "just bloody good manners." But national cohesion, and indeed public order, now depended on a preposterous punctilio: the people wanted a flag flying at half-mast above Buckingham Palace, and the Queen wasn't having it. Flags were flying at half-mast at other royal seats; the flag at the palace, however, flies only when the Queen is staying there (and she was still in Scotland: a further scandal). The flag at the palace doesn't go halfway down for anybody's death, even the monarch's. Within the inner circle, the dispute was unprecedentedly fearsome. ("A lot of people," an aide said, "were heavily scarred by it.") The desperate courtiers were unanimous: the flag must go up. But the Windsors hadn't yet sensed which way the wind was blowing.

As in all matters royal, we are dealing here not with pros and cons, with arguments and counter-arguments; we are dealing with signs and symbols, with fever and magic. To the Queen, the flag (or its absence) was an emblem of her nonnegotiable inheritance. To her subjects, the flag was an emblem—a display—of grief; and a display of grief was what they were demanding. Prime Minister Tony Blair was onto "the mood" so quickly that you feel he must have partaken of it. Before noon on that same Sunday, he huskily addressed the nation: "We are today a nation, in Britain, in a state of shock, in mourning, in grief that is so deeply painful for us. . . . She was the People's Princess, and that's how she will stay, how she will remain in our hearts and in our memories forever." Now the British newspapers, having cheerfully savaged Diana for years (right up to and including that weekend), were cheerfully at work on her black-bordered canonization. "WHERE IS OUR QUEEN? WHERE IS HER FLAG?" "SHOW US YOU CARE." "YOUR PEOPLE ARE SUFFERING. SPEAK TO US, MA'AM."

Diana's funeral was set for Saturday. The Queen had intended to process south, in the royal train, on Friday night. But by now she had adapted to the new reality—had remembered that she was a servant as well as a potentate. She flew down on Friday afternoon; she would speak, she would show us she cared; the flag, which had not been lowered for her father, George VI, would be lowered for Diana. There were heightened fears for the safety of the Queen and Prince Philip when they arrived at Buckingham Palace. Obligingly, they climbed out of their limousine and inspected the shoulder-high heaps of flowers and tributes ("Diana, Queen of Heaven," "Regina Coeli," and so on). It was felt that, at the very least, there might be a repetition of Queen Victoria's experience in her Golden Jubilee year (1887), when she was greeted in the East End by what she called "a horrid noise" she had never heard before: booing. It didn't happen. Here is Robert Lacey's account in his exemplary book "Monarch: The Life and Reign of Elizabeth II" (Free Press; $27.50):

> As Elizabeth II, dressed in black, walked down the line of mourners, an eleven-year-old girl handed her five red roses.
>
> "Would you like me to place them for you?" asked the queen.
>
> "No, Your Majesty," replied the girl. "They are for you."
>
> "You could hear the crowd begin to clap," recalls an aide. "I remember thinking, 'Gosh, it's all right.' "

Well, not yet. There was also the speech. The Queen would have to come as close as she could bring herself to pretending that she loved Princess Diana.

Lacey is very good on the Queen's feelings about feelings, the "curious knotting in the impulses" that complicates her expressions of emotion. She could write a passionate four-page letter to a friend in response to a brief commiseration about the violent death of a favorite corgi. This was heartache of a manageable and articulate order. But when, in 1966, a hill of slag collapsed on a village in South Wales, Aberfan, killing a hundred and sixteen children (and twenty-eight adults), the Queen, against all advice and family precedent, delayed her visit for more than a week. Her husband and her brother-in-law went (and so did the P.M., Harold Wilson); but she felt she would be an immodest distraction from the continuing rescue and relief. When she did go (and she has maintained her links with Aberfan), she involuntarily revealed why she had stayed away. In the photographs, you can see the terror, as well as the pity, in her eyes. She was the Queen. And Aberfan: what did *that* tell her about the state of Great Britain? Monarchical emotion is emotion hugely magnified. It asks for a detachment that Queen Elizabeth only imperfectly commands.

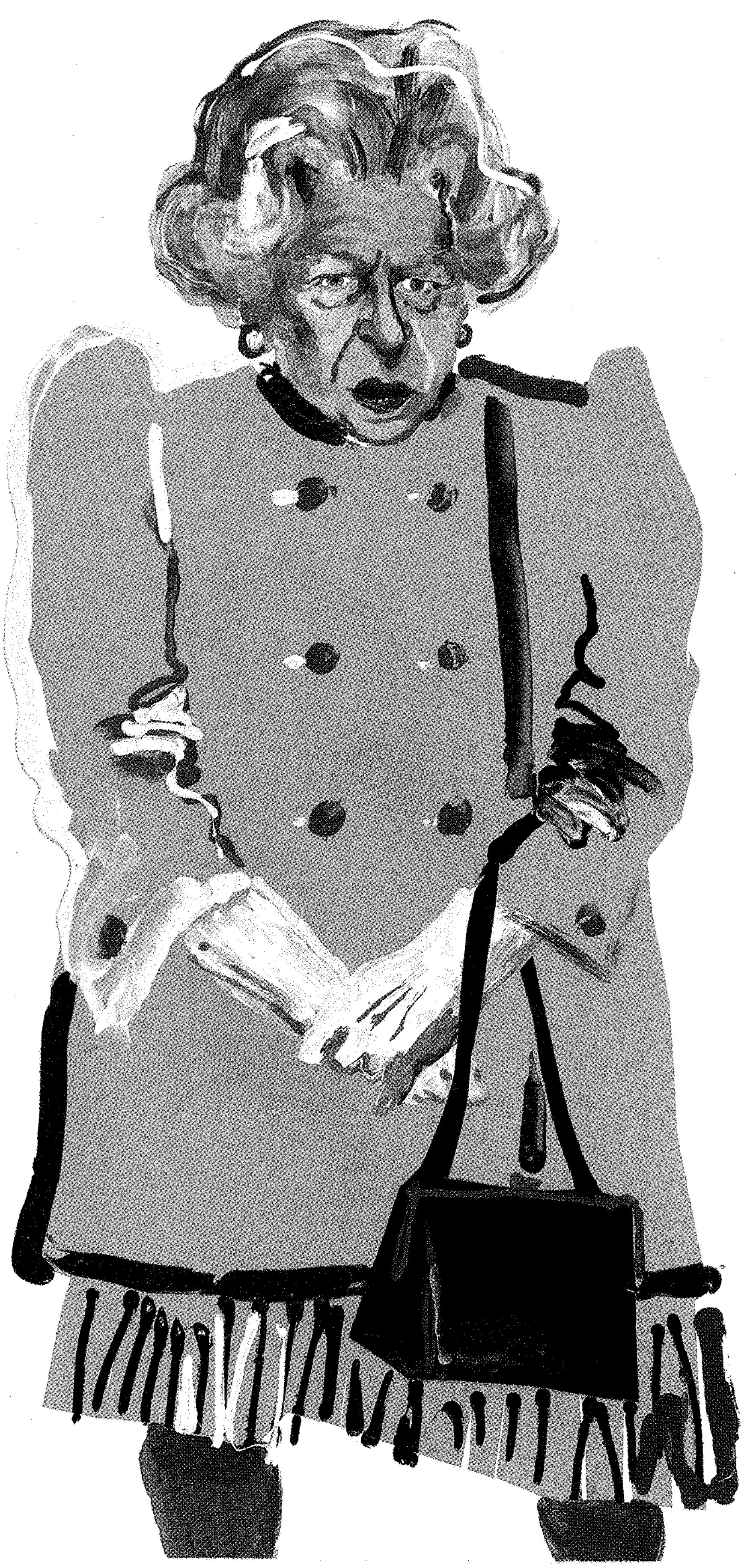
She respects emotion, and cannot fake it. This is one of Lacey's typically pertinent anecdotes:

> Early in her reign, Elizabeth II was due to visit the Yorkshire town of Kingston upon Hull and asked one of her private secretaries to prepare a first draft of her speech.
>
> "I am very pleased to be in Kingston today," the draft confidently started.
>
> The young queen crossed out the word "very."
>
> "I will be *pleased* to be in Kingston," she explained. "But I will not be *very* pleased."

One duly notes, however, that she was, nonetheless, sincerely "pleased" to mingle with various humdrum worthies in the dour surrounds of Kingston upon Hull. The woman is adamantine. How could she emote, to order, for the definitively brittle Diana?

It was to be, in effect, her first live televised speech—in two senses. The Queen addressed the people in real time; and she also had to show them the live being, the creature of glands and membranes. She spoke from the Chinese Dining Room in Buckingham Palace. The windows were open, and you could hear the crowd, ten thousand or more, milling and murmuring in the background. An aide asked the Queen, "Do you think you can do it?" And she answered, "If that's what I've got to do." The countdown began; the floor manager mouthed "Go."

She was being asked to confront an intense need that she didn't understand. No one understood it. Deborah Hart Strober and Gerald S. Strober's "The Monarchy: An Oral Biography of Elizabeth II" (Broadway; $32.50) contains, at this point, entry after entry from assorted insiders expressing blunt incomprehension: "absolutely amazed . . . really amazing . . . beyond my capacity to understand . . . inexplicable . . . astonished . . . staggered," and so on. And we still don't understand it. My best guess is that the phenomenon was millennial. Human beings have always behaved strangely



The Queen has been criticized for aloofness; in fact, she respects emotion and cannot fake it.

DEMETRIOS PSILLOS

when the calendar zeros loom. And Dianamania bore several clear affinities to the excesses described in (for example) Norman Cohn's "The Pursuit of the Millennium": it involved mass emotion; it exalted a personage of low cultural level; it was self-flagellatory in tendency; and it was very close to violence. The phenomenon was, then, part of mankind's cyclical festival of irrationality.

"So what I say to you now," Elizabeth II made clear, "as your Queen and as a grandmother, I say from my heart." It was an extraordinary performance: she gave a near-pathological populace what it wanted, while remaining true to her own self. Of the two words they most needed to hear, she allowed them one ("grief"), but not the other (see below). She didn't sell her integrity to the yearnings of the many. Nor did she attempt the solace of aphoristic eloquence. Curiously enough, she saved that for the events of September 11th: "Grief is the price we pay for love." One final, mangled irony: Diana's boyfriend, Dodi Fayed, was an Egyptian Muslim. "To Diana and Dodi," read the inscription on one floral tribute, "together in heaven." *Which* heaven?

And it was not yet over. With the Windsors, a familial drama inevitably becomes a national drama; but the drama had now become global. At dinner on Friday, it was still uncertain whether the two young princes would walk behind the gun carriage that held their mother's coffin; and "their composure," as Lacey notes, "would be the pivot on which the whole occasion turned." The struggle, once again, was not to divulge emotion but to master it. This was a heavy call on their courage, and, of the two, Prince William was the more uncertain. The royal, the kingly thing, plainly, was to walk. Prince Philip, who had not intended to join the cortège, finally asked his grandson, "If I walk, will you walk with me?" And William walked.

"Damn things!"

If we are to tiptoe into the psyches of the royals, we must first understand that they were all world-famous *babies*. Driven out of the Royal Mews in an open carriage for her regular airings, the diapered Elizabeth drew large crowds of cheering, waving admirers; one of her earliest skills was to wave back. She made the cover of *Time* at the age of three. The first biography, "The Story of Princess Elizabeth," appeared when she was four. "She has an air of authority & reflectiveness astonishing in an infant," wrote Winston Churchill, who would be the first of her ten Prime Ministers. As the Queen celebrates her seventy-sixth birthday, she can reflect that the only time she misbehaved in public was at her christening. She cried throughout, and had to be dosed with dill water.

And the Princess was, at this stage, a minor royal. She was the granddaughter of George V (whom she called Grandpa England), and the niece of the heir apparent, Edward, Prince of Wales. The King died in January, 1936, when Elizabeth was nine. On December 10th, Edward VIII signed the "Instrument of Abdication" (in order to marry the twice-divorced Wallis Simpson), and, in his later wanderings, became a living example of royal futility. The ten-year-old now became the heir presumptive. While her father, who was suddenly George VI, went off to the Accession Council on December 12th, Princess Elizabeth and her sister, Princess Margaret, were given a refresher course on their curtsy by their governess, Marion Crawford; on his return they greeted him with this formality, and it jolted him. "He stood for a moment touched and taken aback. Then he stooped and kissed them both warmly," Crawford wrote. "Does that mean you're going to be Queen?" was a question Margaret put to her sister. "Yes, I suppose it does," said

Elizabeth. "Poor you," said Margaret. Their grandmother Lady Strathmore noticed that Elizabeth had started "ardently praying for a brother."

Prince Philip of Greece was her third cousin, and she had known him, slightly, since childhood. The *coup de foudre* seems to have come when she was thirteen and he was an eighteen-year-old cadet—and the Second World War was six weeks away. Although penniless and homeless, and a nomad all his life, Philip could boast a sensational pedigree (he had a great-great-grandmother in common with Elizabeth: Queen Victoria). His broke father moped in Monte Carlo. His deaf mother fancied that she was the mistress of both Jesus Christ and Buddha; Freud himself advised radiation of the ovaries "to accelerate the menopause." The mental frailty of Diana Spencer has sometimes been attributed to her unhappy childhood. Much more graphic insecurity had the opposite effect on Philip, investing him with a brisk, and sometimes brusque, self-sufficiency. Elizabeth knew what she would be needing in a husband—a source of strength. And this was the strength that Philip was still able to offer his grandsons, nearly sixty years later, on that Saturday in 1997.

Philip and Elizabeth both had a "good" war, Philip distinguishing himself on the battleship Valiant, Elizabeth forming part of the royal *tableau vivant* of national solidarity. (Hitler called her mother "the most dangerous woman in Europe.") They corresponded, and there were visits to Windsor and elsewhere when Philip was on leave. Early in 1947, Elizabeth went abroad for the first time, to South Africa; the idea was to train her up for royal responsibilities but also to test the constancy of her feelings for Philip, to whom she was now unofficially engaged. On April 21st, her twenty-first birthday, she addressed the Empire and the Commonwealth, and the speech was to be broadcast from Cape Town. "It has made me cry," she admitted, after reviewing the final draft. Elizabeth was talking to her people, but one suspects that she was also talking to her future husband:

> It is very simple. I declare before you all that my whole life whether it be long or short shall be devoted to your service and the service of our great imperial family to which we all belong. But I shall not have strength to carry out this resolution alone unless you join in it with me, as I now invite you to do: I know that your support will be unfailingly given. God help me to make good my vow, and God bless all of you who are willing to share in it.

It is not *very* simple, is it—to agree to become a metaphor? At this time, Philip told a friend, "This is my destiny—to support my wife in what lies ahead for her."

They married later that year—a flash of luxury in the postwar monochrome. Within three months, Elizabeth was carrying Charles III. Philip was posted to Malta, and for a while she experienced the unrelieved exoticism of ordinary life. They were in Kenya when word of the King's death reached the royal party. An old friend passed the news on to Philip, and later said, "I never felt so sorry for anyone in all my life." George VI was fifty-six. The total claim on the young couple's freedom was now formally submitted. "He took her up to the garden," the friend went on. "And they walked slowly up and down the lawn while he talked and talked and talked to her."

In addition to their innumerable duties, almost all of them excruciating, the Royal Family has one main function: to go on being a family. In "The Royals," Kitty Kelley's louche but lively blockbuster of 1997, the most capacious subsection in the index for Prince Philip is "and women" ("76, 152, 154-55, 159-60, 192, 196, 265, 422, 423-27, 510-11"). Lacey's emphasis falls the other way ("rumors of infidelities, 166-168, 212"). And there is certainly a moral persuasiveness in Philip's confidence to a relative, "How could I be unfaithful to the Queen? There is no way that she could possibly retaliate." The skittish Diana could not dissimulate her exasperation with married life; but neither could the duteous Charles. The demeanor of his parents, at least to this distant observer, is eloquent of mutual ease and admiration. Anyway, there they are, still, in 2002.

Divorce is modern, and monarchy must fear modernity. Now modernity came to the Windsors in the form of their own children. When Princess Margaret broke up with the Earl of Snowdon, it was the first royal divorce in centuries. It used to be the case that the

STATEMENTS
(six)
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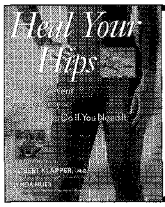

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Lord Chamberlain personally excluded the divorced from the Queen's presence. "In later years the Lord Chamberlain's duties were modified," Kelley writes eagerly, "so the Queen could visit her divorced cousins, her divorced sister, her divorced daughter, and her two divorced sons, including the heir to the throne." Meanwhile, her third son, Edward (recently married), was somehow acquiring the nickname of Dockyard Doris.

So we come to 1992, the "annus horribilis." Princess Anne divorced in April. In August, the Duchess of York—Fergie—was photographed topless with a "financial adviser" (who was administering the famous "toe-job"). At this juncture, another tabloid released the "Squidgygate" tapes, in which Diana pillow-talked on the phone with a young car salesman. And that November it was revealed that Charles had been recorded while having a similarly intimate chat with Camilla Parker Bowles. Long intrigued by the idea of the transmigration of souls, Charles saw himself reborn as, "God forbid, a Tampax," so that he could "just live inside your trousers." The Camillagate and Squidgygate tapes were both available on phone lines provided by the newspapers. You could listen to Charles saying, "I want to feel my way along you, all over you and up and down you and in and out . . . particularly in and out." Then you could listen to Diana saying, "Bloody hell, after all I've done for this fucking family." Then came the great fire at Windsor. The monarchy was burning.

Or so it seemed. In fact, only Diana had the power to bring it all down; and this was her semi-subliminal intention. George Orwell, in his long essay "The English People," described the placards in the streets during the Silver Jubilee celebrations for George V, in 1935: "Some of the London slum streets bore . . . the rather servile slogan 'Poor but Loyal.' " Other slogans, though, "coupled loyalty to the King with hostility to the landlord, such as 'Long Live the King. Down with the Landlord,' or more often, 'No Landlords Wanted' or 'Landlords Keep Away.' " Orwell elaborates:

> The affection shown for George V . . . was obviously genuine, and it was even possible to see in it the survival, or recrudescence, of an idea almost as old as history, the idea of the King and the common people being in a sort of alliance against the upper classes.

What Diana tried to bring about was an alliance between herself and the common people against the Royal Family. "The People's Princess" was an entirely sophistical notion—and it worked. Despite the "pattern of deceit and narcissism" (Lacey), the schemes and manipulations, and the near-Sicilian taste for revenge, Diana, of course, had a genius for love—for indiscriminate love. Her besetting humor was self-pity; and temporary relief from its corrosiveness, I think, lay behind the undoubted force of her presence among the suffering. This connects again to the dangerous emotions that attended her death. Self-pity is a natural component of grief, of a roused sense of mortality, but in Dianamania it sourly predominated. "Bloody hell, after all I've done for this fucking family": In the end, horribly, what she did for the family was to die. It was a Restoration.

This project of Diana's was doubly radical, because the monarchy is maintained by love. If you are English, then your patriotism is unconscious (Orwell again); when it becomes conscious, and focussed, it surprises you with a sense of hunger awakened and allayed. The feeling is unmistakably familial. "A princely marriage is the brilliant edition of a universal fact," Bagehot wrote, "and as such, it rivets mankind." The same could be said of a princely funeral—or, nowadays, of a princely divorce. The Royal Family is just a family, writ inordinately large. They are the glory, not the power; and it would clearly be far more grownup to do without them. But riveted mankind is hopelessly addicted to the irrational, with reliably disastrous results, planetwide. The monarchy allows us to take a holiday from reason; and on that holiday we do no harm. ♦

From the Logan (Utah) Herald Journal.

CHUNKS OF MEAT FOUND IN GARDEN

Several weeks after a Logan woman discovered a loaf of bread in her flower bed, a Hyrum woman reported finding two pieces of meat buried in her back yard.

The woman told a sheriff's deputy that she found one piece of meat in her front flower bed and another one in her backyard flower garden, according to a Cache County sheriff's report.

Witnesses say she butchered the account.

BOOKS

EXILE ON WALL STREET

Soul-searching at Cramer Partners.

BY DAVID DENBY

At the peak of his Wall Street success, James J. Cramer would get up at 3:45 A.M. at his home, in Summit, New Jersey, and go online and write a short article for the investment Web site he had co-founded, TheStreet.com. Then his chauffeur would drive him to the offices of the hedge fund he managed, at 100 Wall, where he would arrive at his trading desk at 5:30 A.M. and begin working the overseas exchanges. Later in the early morning, he would appear on ABC's "Good Morning America" or CNBC's "Squawk Box," assailing the camera in his impassioned, hectoring whine as he sussed out the movements of the markets. He would then go back to his company and trade all day, from the nine-thirty opening bell to the market close, at four, making perhaps two hundred moves, sometimes holding stocks for less than a minute. As he shifted millions of shares in and out of the market, he would send off additional pieces to TheStreet.com, and, many nights, he would do another television show. After sleeping for three or four hours, he would begin all over again. In brief, during the fourteen years that Cramer managed his fund, from 1987 to 2000, he tried as hard as anyone could to play the market around the clock, dividing time into smaller and smaller units, each demanding an action either reinforced or cancelled by another action, sometimes only seconds later. His nerves vibrating through bouts of exhaustion, he struggled against the recalcitrance of investment fashion and chance.

Cramer's memoir, "Confessions of a Street Addict" (Simon & Schuster; $26), is an account of an extreme form of exhilaration that turned, by degrees, into a nightmare. Generally successful as a hedge-fund manager, he nevertheless suffered from what he calls "an inability to value myself beyond my last trade," and agonized over losses of his investors' money. (At its peak, the fund controlled roughly $450 million for about ninety clients.) When things went badly, even for just a moment, he would sweat and curse, shriek at colleagues and brokers, smash telephone receivers on the trading desk, and throw computer monitors to the ground, sending black smoke curling upward in the office. But Cramer, from the evidence of his "Confessions," is a far more thoughtful and perceptive man than such theatrics would suggest. He knew that he was terrorizing people and came to understand that he was destroying himself. His book is a shrewd self-portrait of a hero who cannot stop himself from becoming a fool—a fool who then seeks redemption by admitting his failures more loudly than a medieval flagellant in a public square. Cramer, it turns out, conceives of investment not just as a way of getting rich but as a vale of soul-making.

James J. Cramer

ROBERT RISKO

Cramer was born in 1955 in a suburb of Philadelphia, where his father worked as a jobber for the National Gift Wrap & Package Company. Cramer's mother, a sculptor, wanted him to be a writer, but he compulsively studied stocks, even as a child. Every day, he marked up a ledger book with prices—"gaming the close," as he calls it—and, at the age of nine, he was making money in an imaginary portfolio by trading the most volatile stocks and going for quick gains. A scholarship boy at Harvard, he became president of the *Crimson*, the daily student newspaper, and trained himself to go without sleep, working through most of the night, napping a few hours, going to classes, and occasionally laboring through the next night as well. After college, he went to work as a general-assignment reporter at the Los Angeles *Herald Examiner*. During that time, a thief repeatedly broke into his bungalow, in the Fairfax district, and eventually cleaned him out. For the next nine months, Cramer slept in the back seat of his Ford Fairmont, a hatchet by his side. He has apparently felt undefended and vulnerable his entire adult life—a victim of other people's malice and ineptitude. Early on, he developed the habits of working harder than anyone else and anticipating the actions of others. Striking first became a form of defense.

In 1982, after a stint at *The American Lawyer*, Cramer entered Harvard Law School, where he would sit at the back of his classes and pore over the *Wall Street Journal*, an act of rudeness that he seems to have atoned for, in some cases, by advising his professors on their portfolios. The long bull market, which persisted through the crash of 1987, the pause of 1994, and the brief panic of the fall of 1998, was just getting under way, and Cramer, thoroughly excited, would leave a stock tip on his answering machine, changing the pick on Sunday nights. One of the people who called in was Martin Peretz, the Harvard political-theory professor and the owner of *The New Republic*. After a month of good returns on Cramer's advice, Peretz insisted that they meet at a Cambridge coffeehouse, where he handed the law student a check for five hundred thousand dollars, instructing him to invest it as he pleased. A few years later, after spending some uneasy time at Goldman, Sachs, Cramer set up his hedge fund, Cramer Partners, with help from Peretz, who induced some of his wealthy friends to invest their money with his protégé.

Although plenty of sane men and women run hedge funds, the funds seem to have been designed for manic personalities. Restricted by government regulation to the wealthy, they employ risk strategies forbidden to mutual funds, such as unlimited stock "shorting," extensive borrowing, and making enormous bets on single stocks. The management of a garden-variety mutual fund takes a small percentage of the assets; it gets paid whether the fund shows gains for the year or not. A hedge fund like Cramer's, by contrast, takes a management fee of one per cent and no less than twenty per cent of the yearly gains, realized or unrealized. But if the fund loses money the manager doesn't make a dime until he gets back to even, no matter how long that takes.

For Cramer, this was both a point of honor and a source of terror; he ran the fund as if its existence were at stake every day and any loss were a portent of doom. He refused loyalty to any stock, industry, or sector; on one occasion, he emptied out the fund's holdings at a moment's notice and started over. He was tutored in ruthlessness by his wife, Karen Backfisch, who joined him at Cramer Partners after a successful career as a trader at Steinhardt Partners. Backfisch, whom Cramer insists on calling "the Trading Goddess," taught him tricks like spreading commissions around to a great many brokers—in effect, purchasing information from them that he could use. And she taught him to "trade flow"; that is, to buy the last two hundred thousand shares of a big institutional sell-off (say, a million shares of Microsoft, sold in pieces). The sell-off would drive the price down, allowing Cramer to feed his depressed shares back into the market with gains as other institutional customers rushed in to take advantage of the decline. This sort of bounce-off-the-bottom manipulation requires exact timing, and the book has its share of semi-farcical but harrowing scenes in which Cramer stands on his desk and screams at his traders to buy a certain stock, and then, a few seconds later, screams at them to sell it. The constant mania of "Confessions" borders on exhibitionism, but, as drama yields to psychodrama, exaltation to anguish and then back, the narrative keeps winging along. Cramer is good at re-creating the abrupt shifts and stomach-turning reversals, the steam building up inside his head. A journalistic master of panic, he writes what might be called hardboiled market prose:

> Next thing you knew it was down six. In sixty seconds. Like some sort of Mercedes in reverse. I was out of answers. I thought it was plain wrong. We were playing lean, however, and I didn't want to inflict any damage on the pristine year. I listened as someone on the tube yammered that the stock was going lower. I saw the bids disappearing. I saw the loss mounting. I was sweating and angry, shaking my head.

Cramer "played the tape," taking advantage of whichever way the market was going, up or down, buying and selling for gains of a point or two—or even a half point—at a time. He acted like a day trader with several hundred million dollars at his disposal. His grasshopper approach to investing obviously has nothing to do with building industries or allocating capital in a rational way; its sole purpose is to extract relatively small amounts of gain from each trade—ten thousand dollars here, twenty thousand dollars there. On a good day, the gains can add up to half a million dollars.

As the profitable years went on, however, Cramer's immersion in the market began to ruin his life and his friendships. In "Confessions," the many passages of boasting are more than matched by passages of the most savage self-contempt. The book becomes a kind of moral suspense story: will Cramer's disgust finally overtake his sense of himself as a success? "I had let my emotions screw me up again and had betrayed someone who had meant no ill will for me, simply because I wanted to be on some television show that I liked a lot," he remarks wearily. He admits that he talked stocks with Peretz hours after his mother's death and that he took a call from his research director in the delivery room just as the Trading Goddess was giving birth. Perhaps worst of all, he betrayed his benefactor, badmouthing Peretz, who was also the co-founder of The Street.com, in a set of e-mails to one of the Web site's employees, who then sent them to Peretz. When Cramer ran into stock-picking trouble in October of 1998, and was down more than thirty per cent for the year, Peretz paid him back by pulling his money out of the fund; so, apparently, did his wealthy friends. Cramer's Oedipal misery and rage knew no bounds. "I am an idiot, a loser, I don't deserve people's trust," he intoned to himself at the time, as his fund threatened to collapse.

Peretz had inadvertently created another problem for Cramer four years earlier, when he recommended that he hire Nicholas W. Maier, the son of two of his Harvard friends. Maier, who had recently graduated from college, had no experience in finance, but he wanted to make money quickly. Blessed with the opportunity of a lifetime to do just that, he was nevertheless resentful when Cramer's staff didn't have time to explain things to him and treated him harshly. Still, he stayed until 1998, and has recorded his experiences in "Trading with the Enemy" (HarperBusiness; $22.95). Maier's little volume tells of coping with a volcanic force who posed actual dangers, but it gives the unfortunate impression of having been written by someone with an overly comfortable upbringing: Maier tends to grade people by how nice they are to him. He sets himself up as a man of feeling, in contrast to the bullies and toadies in the office, but, as a literary creation, he is a pale and watery figure compared with the hysterical-oracular Cramer. In any case, Cramer may have been right to berate him for making mistakes. Maier, in the last chapter of his book, had accused Cramer of insider trading. The charge proved to be incorrect, and the publisher had to issue a retraction and pulp four thousand copies of the first printing.

Maier is convincing, though, on what the job did to him physically and morally as he began to imitate Cramer's eruptive style. In an irony that may suggest a lot about the madness of markets, both men—very different from each other and now enemies—quit Wall Street. Cramer pulled out of his 1998 slump, but gave up the fund in 2000, soon after his wife and kids went on vacation without him. For years, he had been nuttily overcommitted, constantly getting into trouble as he spoke and wrote about stocks while running the fund, causing many people to wonder if he was praising or knocking his own positions in order to increase their value or sell them short. He insists that he behaved ethically (the S.E.C. once investigated him and cleared him of any wrongdoing), but the charges wore him down, and he was disgusted by the Internet-bubble euphoria that pushed the value of his own company, TheStreet.com, to a ridiculous and unsustainable price on the day of its initial public offering, in 1999. He had played the I.P.O. game himself, buying shares of semi-worthless companies and "flipping" them after a quick rise on opening day. When other people then did the same thing with *his* semi-worthless company, he was overwhelmed by the absurdity of it. Cramer is a mass of contradictions, cynical and honest at the same time, a candid and original man rising and falling through American capitalism's giddiest age.

Does Cramer's habit of non-stop trading have any special value as an investment strategy? His fund averaged a twenty-four-per-cent return to his investors, after fees, for his fourteen years—much better than the S. & P. 500 Index's fifteen per cent and the Dow's fourteen per cent. It's a fine performance, but wasn't the thrill and danger at times an end in itself? This may be the one truth Cramer can't bring himself to admit. Other fund managers (George Soros and Julian Robertson, Jr., among them), who worked without bouts of insanity, performed even better; some of those were managers who held stocks for long periods of time, and Warren Buffett, who holds stocks forever, remains the greatest investor of all.

Bellicose, self-justifying, coarse, infantile, lovable, and even, at times, saintly, Cramer resembles Dostoyevsky's hero in "The Gambler," who hurls himself at the flames because life without risk would be unbearable. For such a personality, losing may offer as great an emotional payoff as winning. Cramer's skill at exposition and at communicating these emotions is finally more notable than his considerable skill at trading. He is the greatest public generator of excitement and knowledge about the market today. (He stills writes for TheStreet.com and has radio and television shows.) When he perceives something—anything—he experiences an irresistible joy in explaining it to whoever will listen. In ten or twenty years, his kind of trading ability will doubtless be replaced by computers, but, as they methodically and quietly pass digits in and out of the market, they will never make us feel anything like the moment-by-moment terror of big money, and, in Cramer's version, life itself, hanging in the balance. ♦

BRIEFLY NOTED

Gould's Book of Fish, *by Richard Flanagan (Grove; $27.50).* This remarkable novel is a meditation on colonialism—indeed, on history itself—couched in the story of an English guttersnipe, William Gould, who is sent to a penal colony in Tasmania in the eighteen-twenties. The book starts like Defoe, with wenching and bar fights. Then, to address the horrors of the colony, it shifts toward magic realism; the local surgeon sends the heads of black men, pickled in brine, back to the Royal Society, in London, to prove that Negroes are not descended from Adam. (In this vein, Flanagan also supplies one of the most profound sex scenes in recent literature.) Finally, however, the book resembles only itself, a serene, chilling vision of human life as comparable to the life of fish, "swimming in vast coldness, alone."

The Dive from Clausen's Pier, *by Ann Packer (Knopf; $24).* At the start of this quietly engrossing début novel, twenty-three-year-old Carrie Bell is tiring of her stalled life in Madison, Wisconsin, and her bland, relentlessly loving boyfriend of eight years' standing. When a dive into the local reservoir leaves him paralyzed from the neck down, she flees to Manhattan, where she takes shelter with a group of wannabe artists in a decaying Chelsea brownstone and falls for an elusive older man. The journey is a familiar one, but Packer fleshes it out with a naturalist's vigilance for detail, so that her characters seem observed rather than invented, and capable of mistakes that the author may never have intended. The result is genuine suspense, as Carrie feels her way toward the truth about herself, and what it means to be a moral being.

Rouse Up O Young Men of the New Age!, *by Kenzaburo Oe, translated from the Japanese by John Nathan (Grove; $24).* A Japanese author, who mirrors this book's author, broods on the life and works of William Blake while writing some episodic fiction that closely resembles this novel. The narrator, who has a disabled son, finds his own life and works transformed by Blake, but his interpretation of Blake also changes as his personal circumstances change; the same is true of his son's hilarious utterances. This elegant work is a mordantly entertaining reflection on the uses of literature and imagination; alert readers may be inspired to apply its lessons to the text at hand.

Unless, *by Carol Shields (HarperCollins; $24.95).* Reta Winters—loving helpmeet to a doctor, mother of three cheerful daughters, and author of a successful comic novel—has always considered herself happy, even blessed. Then her eldest child, nineteen-year-old Norah, briefly disappears and resurfaces as a panhandling mute on a Toronto street corner, holding up a homemade placard that says "Goodness." Shields's ability to use Reta's darkest fears to reveal the order lurking in chaos, without ever losing her light touch (Laurie Colwin comes to mind), is nothing short of astonishing.

Dreams of a Robot Dancing Bee: 44 Stories, *by James Tate (Verse; $23).* Like forty-four test tubes, these stories contain a series of meticulously prepared chemistry experiments. In most, two disparate characters result in a highly unstable compound, producing a fizz, a moral insight, and a sense of personality as destiny. A wife realizes that her husband is crazy. A husband realizes that his wife is crazy. A closet boxing fanatic decides to run off to Egypt with a sexy young boxing fanatic. Whatever the dysfunction, Tate, the long-acclaimed poet, uses a disarmingly pedestrian voice to lure the reader to a place of bizarre poignancy. He makes eccentricity look good, as a poet should.

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THE CURRENT CINEMA

STAR STRUCK

"Attack of the Clones" and "Hollywood Ending."

BY DAVID DENBY

When the first "Star Wars" movie came out, in 1977, many of us admired it as an enormous spoof. Despite some startlingly fresh elements—enchanted landscapes, a bestiary of snouted, furred, and beaked creatures gurgling in Urdu—the movie felt like a joking homage to "Buck Rogers" and "Flash Gordon." The white-suited mugs running up and down corridors with their little ray guns; the high-school-cafeteria banter between Carrie Fisher and Harrison Ford; the elocutionary stiffness of the serious moments; the stoically fourth-rate actors in minor roles—how else could one take such scenes except as intentionally banal? But those of us who enjoyed the first picture as frivolous pop spectacle must have been wrong: we quickly had our mouths washed out with texts. Commentators of every sort insisted on mighty significances—religio-Jungian-Wagnerian myth structures and deep-dish psychological meanings. George Lucas, who directed and wrote the movie, attained an eminence that settled somewhere between that of Lao-tzu and Alexander Graham Bell—the sage of Marin County as the ultimate inventor. He relinquished the director's reins for two movies (to Irvin Kershner and Richard Marquand), but when he got back in the game himself, with "The Phantom Menace" (1999), he seemed to have been listening too closely to the commentators. The picture was dead on the screen. What was enjoyably silly about the first movie was gone, and even some of the true believers noticed that Lucas couldn't tell a story clearly or with any emotional impact; that he turned two of the sexiest actors in the English-speaking world (Liam Neeson and Ewan McGregor) into sticks; that the vaunted digitized backgrounds were distant and inert, barely integrated into the movie.

"Star Wars: Episode II—Attack of the Clones" is much better, though the plot is incomprehensible to anyone over the age of fourteen. The Republic? The Federation? The Separatists? The clone army? The droid army? The Siths? The Kith? The Kin? Everyone's in it, a blur of names and forces. And the actors, most of them vaguely British, intone their starched-collar lines as if they were attending a convention of rural vicars. But, allowing for some dull moments, this movie has considerable visual style. The spacecraft are more beautiful than any seen before—silver birds with knife-thin wings flying through slate-gray interstellar landscapes. The multilevel cities overflow with life, high up, low down, and everywhere in between. This time, Lucas's frame is alive, and he makes good dramatic use of such things as a stinging dark rain that douses two men as they fight on a sloping metallic plane. The droid factory, a sort of intergalactic satanic mill, becomes a place of newly imagined Victorian horror. Digital invention is becoming grander, wilder, more free-spirited. Lucas and his computer artists have a ball with the climactic scene in which the former queen, Senator Padmé Amidala (Natalie Portman), and the Jedi knights Obi-Wan Kenobi (McGregor) and Anakin Skywalker (Hayden Christensen) are chained up in an arena. What starts as a grisly execution (clawed and fanged creatures are let loose on them) becomes a deranged gladiatorial combat in the sand. The mayhem is delirious fun.

A liberated digital technology could send pop to giddy new heights. At the end of the movie, Christopher Lee, still

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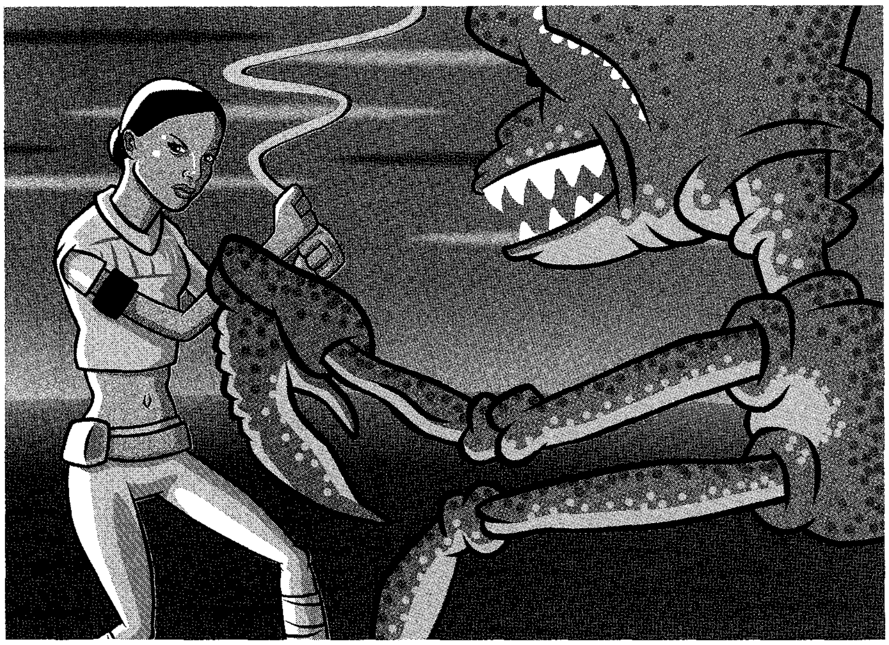
in good voice at the age of seventy-nine, after more than two hundred pit-and-the-pendulum movies, takes on Yoda, who enters leaning on a walking stick, an old, decrepit, and tiny Jedi knight. Suddenly, Yoda comes to life: with a look of grim determination, he pulls out a lightsaber and begins flipping himself over the enormous Lee. The visual joke is so good that one cannot lament the loss of realism. Lucas shifts back and forth between this kind of original invention and a dependence on pompous dead-level dreck, a grade-B cheapness that he's obviously addicted to. He's no longer spoofing the old material; he's redoing it in grandiose terms. His dramatic imagination is still severely limited, but it would be nice to think that his visual imagination is just taking off.



Natalie Portman as Senator Padmé Amidala in "Star Wars: Episode II."

MICHAEL WELDON

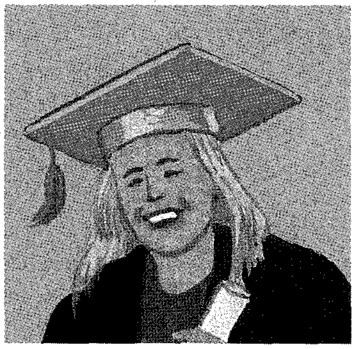
Téa Leoni's puckered mouth broadens into a dazzling smile in Woody Allen's "Hollywood Ending." The long lean body, draped in cashmere, doesn't make a bad impression, either. And that's only the half of it. There are lots of good-looking women in the movies, but in this role Leoni becomes a supremely attractive *person*—so intelligent, loyal, and true that you feel both grateful to Woody Allen for bringing her out and angry at him for chaining her to his own aging trunk and fretful temperament. Leoni plays Ellie, a movie-studio executive who has both tough and gentle impulses—a romantic in a lion tamer's job. Allen plays a washed-up movie director, Val Waxman, a real pain in the neck. Val used to be married to Ellie, who is now with a smoothly dominating studio boss (Treat Williams). She prevails upon her boyfriend to give Val one last shot—a big-budget movie—and, of course, Val falls apart. His hands jerking up and down like a forklift gone mad, Allen delivers agitated dither and self-accusing rant better than anyone. He has funny moments, but he pushes Val too far into infantile misery. There's a lot of talk in "Hollywood Ending" about what an artist Val used to be, about how he's the perfect guy to make a tough, gritty movie set in New York, but the man we see hasn't the slightest interest in anything outside himself. Is there some sort of covert truth-telling going on here? Allen, famous for his tics and phobias, and tyrannically shy, may be trying to shed a part of himself that he knows troubles people. If so, his Val could be one of those self-parodies so devastating that it wipes out the parodist. I'm not sure I want to see Woody Allen onscreen ever again.

Just as the picture goes into production, Val contracts a case of neurotic blindness. He can't see at all, and he's in a state. At this point, the audience may feel some desperation of its own. As the shoot begins, Val gets various people to help him fake his way through it. Even Ellie shows up from the Coast and takes over the role of seeing-eye dog, an act that somehow rekindles her passion for him. Val, staggering and dropping whatever he's handed, can't tell one prop from another, yet no one on the set notices that he's blind. Allen's comic strategies have grown awfully thin in recent years. In his last movie, "The Curse of the Jade Scorpion," he relied on the manipulations of a mesmerist who spoke the magic word into the telephone, causing people to fall into trances and commit crimes. "Hollywood Ending" is farce, of course, and you have to cut it some slack. But Allen is cutting himself too much slack, and he's beginning to strangle himself with elaborately terrible ideas. In order to keep going at all, this movie becomes devoted to awkward, literal plot devices—getting Val across the set, keeping inquisitive people away from him. A conceit that might have worked in a Chaplin two-reeler takes over and nearly destroys a full-length feature.

Some of the teasing of big-studio manners is observant and sharp-tongued. Allen re-creates the automatic flattery in the executive offices, the bullying friendliness and instinctive habits of strategic lying. A curious character played by George Hamilton—a silver-haired executive carrying a golf club—hangs around at all times, spying on the creative people and intimidating everyone with his perfect tan. "Hollywood Ending" has its satirical charms, but it repeats itself remorselessly, and it has no emotional center. We are so distant from Val that when he gets his sight back we don't feel a thing. Too late in the movie, Val's long-lost son shows up, with green hair and body piercings, and Allen first makes sour jokes about the punk regalia and then turns the kid into the emotional key to Val's troubles. The son is a Freudian afterthought, a bizarre footnote to a case study which improbably cracks the case. Isn't there anyone in Woody Allen's entourage strong enough to tell him that this stuff doesn't work? The notion of Téa Leoni dedicating her life to a spiritually alive aging artist might have been romantically satisfying and even touching. The idea of her devoting her life to an inept narcisso who doesn't connect with anyone is a kick right to the audience's midsection. ♦

THE BACK PAGE BY BRUCE McCALL

FOR THAT 2002 COLLEGE GRAD



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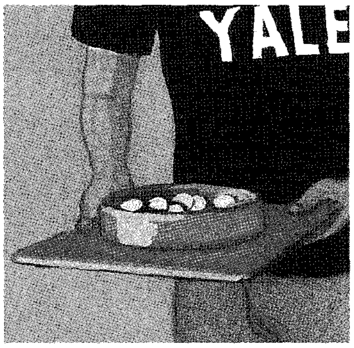
Sturdy waterproof unit is a one-size-fits-all university-approved mortarboard with dense-weave, no-twist tassel—until you flip it over. Then your favorite grad is holding the classiest way to panhandle, bar none! Heavy-duty but lightweight receptacle has extra-wide brim for solid grip and holds up to $500 in coins. The word "Please" (specify Latin, ancient Greek, Sanskrit) can be embroidered onto front panel in fine gold thread—at no extra cost. **$100**

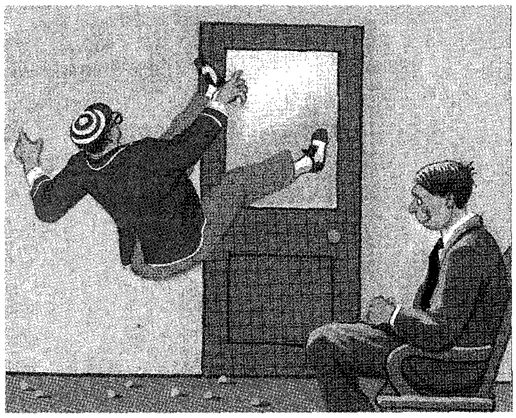


EDIBLE APPOINTMENT BOOK No interviews? No money for a meal? No hassle! Mr. or Ms. Newly Jobless Grad will find each empty page in this 365-day pocket schedule to be a high-fibre, 100% all-organic recycled snack food with the concentrated nutritional value to keep him or her pounding the pavement for hours. In wintergreen, bulgur, strawberry, or kelp flavor. (Warning: Leatheramic binding not edible.) **$45**

PORTABLE PENTHOUSE "Gee, Mom and Dad, thanks—my very own home!" Help your new grad set up housekeeping on Fifth Avenue, Rodeo Drive, Worth Avenue—you name it—now that the old family manse is off limits. Roomy but ultra-light 6 x 4 x 3-ft. cardboard shelter has built-in tow rope for easy dragging, and fits over any open grate in a jiff, while perforated floor guarantees cozy winter warmth. Comes complete with duct tape for swift repairs, 24-oz. anti-louse-spray dispenser, secret peekaboo pinhole for guest screening. **$175**

FREELANCE-DOORMAN UNIFORM Help your young grad pick up needed $$$ while waiting for that big break by filling in for missing or unconscious luxury-building doormen and grabbing their tips! Full Soviet Navy admiral's dress uniform includes cap, sash, sword, epaulets, and medals, medals, medals. Extra large only. **$295**

TRIP-'EM-UP WAITING-ROOM MARBLES

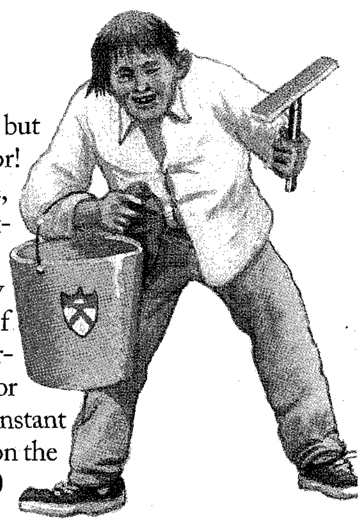


Why should that smug weenie from the Harvard B-School beat your State U. grad to an important interview? When they call the little big shot's name, your boy uncaps his jar of Trip-'Em-Up marbles—and, while Mr. Hasty Pudding writhes on the floor with a busted sacroiliac, guess who's already through the door and sitting pretty? Chip-proof marbles are regulation size, in decorator colors. Set of 25. **$25**

"YOU CAN'T GO HOME AGAIN" FRAMED PARCHMENT HOMILY Facsimile Thomas Wolfe autograph adds a literary touch to this timeless phrase, serving as a constant reminder to the newly minted grad. Adhesive backing makes it ideal for hanging in Y.M.C.A. dorm, rented room, flophouse, alleyway, etc. **$10**

ONE-WAY BUS TICKET TO MEXICO Maybe Wall Street said no, but Mexico says "*Sí!*" when jobless Junior hops off the Zapata Coach Lines bus just outside Tijuana and gets set to wait for the miracle of NAFTA, with its high-paying jobs. Buses leave every midnight from designated Rio Grande stops. **$300**

IVY LEAGUE SQUEEGEE & PAIL Sensible but elegant gift for that liberal-arts major! Squeegee features E-Z-Grasp handle, carved from the same wood used for Oxford University's hallowed dining tables. Double-capacity water pail in university colors bears detailed official seal of (specify one) Princeton, Columbia, Harvard, Yale, Cornell, Dartmouth, Penn, or Brown, which glows in the dark for instant recognition by alums and former profs on the darkest street corners in the city. **$200**



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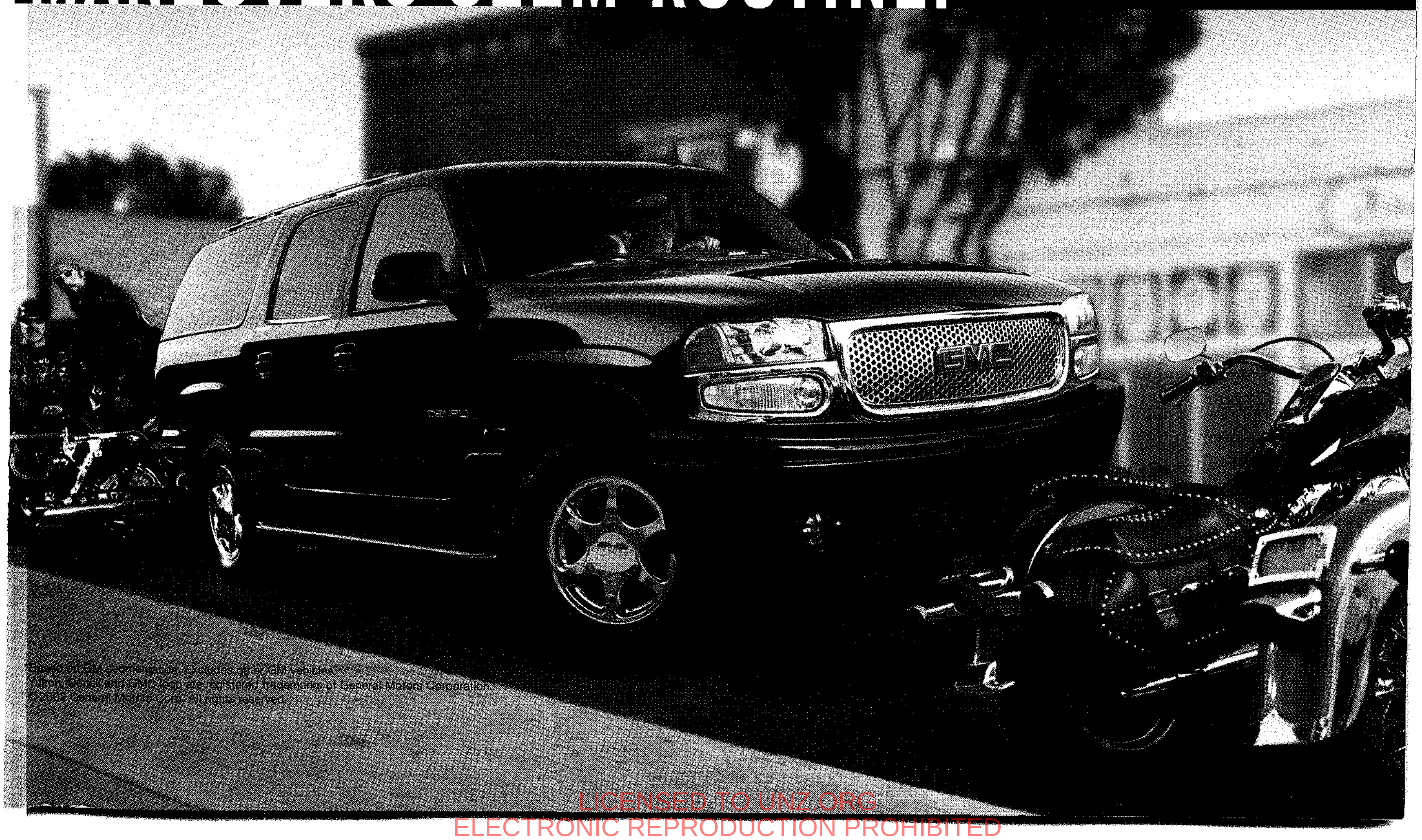
IT MAKES THE MOST DANGEROUS MANEUVERS SEEM ROUTINE.



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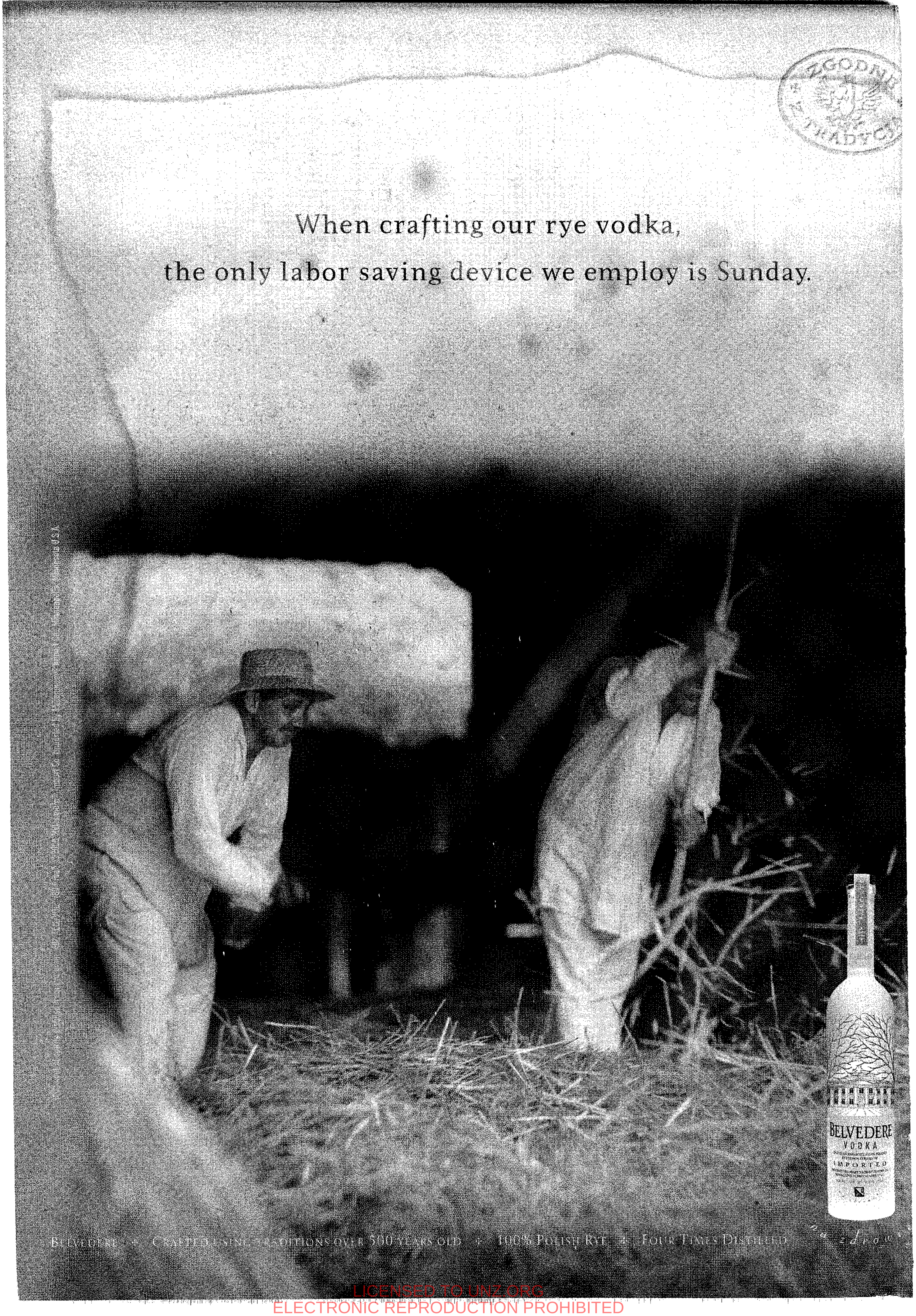
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